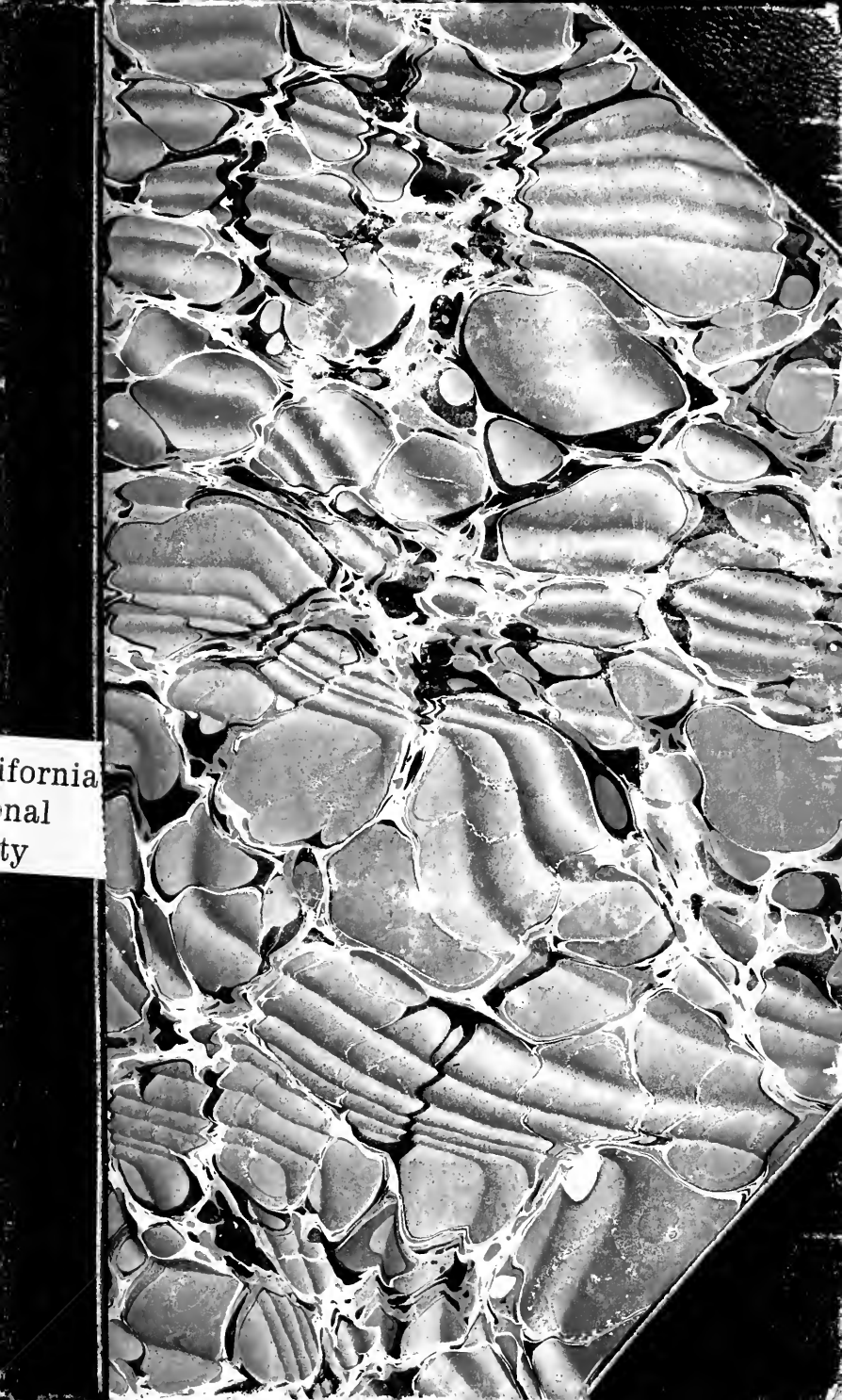
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THE RURAL LIFE OF ENGLAND.

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THE RURAL LIFE OF ENGLAND:

BY

WILLIAM HOWITT,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOOK OF THE SEASONS," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS.

1838.

LONDON:
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IVY-LANE, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

O, dear Britain! O my mother isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain! O my mother isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain rills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drank in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honorable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joys and greatness of its future being.
There lives not form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country. O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God who made me.

Coleridge.

TO

THOMAS AND PHEBE HOWITT,

OF HEANOR,

IN THE COUNTY OF DERBY.

My dear Parents,

There are no living persons to whom these volumes can be with so much propriety inscribed as to you. To you my heart desires to present some visible token of that affection and gratitude which animate it in reviewing all the good it has derived from you. It was to your inculcations, but far more to the spirit of your daily life,—to the purity, integrity, independent feeling, and simple religion,—in fact, to the pervading and perpetual atmosphere of your house, that I owe everything which has directed me onward in life: scorning whatever is mean; aspiring after whatever is generous and noble; loving the poor and the weak, and fearless of the strong; in a word, everything which has not only prolonged life, but blessed and sanctified it. Following

your counsels and example, I have striven not so much for wealth as for an independent spirit and a pure conscience. Do I not owe you much for these? But besides this, it was under your roof that I passed a childhood and youth the happiest that ever were passed; it was there that I imbibed that love of nature, which must live though it cannot die with me. But beyond this, the present volumes are descriptive of that rural life to which your ancestors for many generations, and yourselves to an honourable old age, have been invariably and deeply attached. To you, therefore, for these and a thousand other kindred reasons,

THE PRESENT VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED,

BY YOUR AFFECTIONATE SON,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

In sending these volumes to press, it would be ungrateful not to avow my satisfaction in the great and continued popularity of the "Book of the Seasons." The cordiality, indeed, with which both my own and Mrs. Howitt's writings have been received by the public, is the more gratifying, seeing that we have lived, in a great measure, apart from the literary circles,—have belonged to no coterie; had no connexion with the influential of the critical press—and at the time of the publication of our first volume, did not actually know one literary person. We have not, therefore, had the benefit of that interest which naturally springs from personal intercourse with literary parties. Whatever kindness has been shewn to our writings—and it has been both great and greatly felt,—with, it is true, some exhibitions of critical spleen, to us quite unaccountable—has been shewn to our writings themselves.

Whilst acknowledging this, there is one fact that

I am bound not to pass over without notice. In availing myself of occasional passages from the works of cotemporaries, I have but one simple rule; and that is, uniformly to acknowledge the loan. It is a glorious rule, "to do as you would be done by:" and I regret to have to complain, that that golden rule has not been very nicely observed towards me. The Book of the Seasons has been, by several writers, freely drawn upon for descriptions of nature, and the seasons, without the slightest acknowledgment. I believe every original anecdote and trait of birds and other animals, has been extracted, and repeated so frequently, without any intimation of whence they are borrowed, that any one now reading the Book of the Seasons for the first time, would naturally imagine that I myself had borrowed them of others. In one of the last volumes of Time's Telescope that appeared, after that interesting work had ceased to be under the management of my worthy friend John Millard, free and unacknowledged use of such things was made. In one of the Companions to the British Almanack, the tables of the migrations of birds which had cost me much labour to construct, were taken entire, and in the following volume the *borrower* felicitated himself on being the happy *author* of these tables! In one of the books of Mr. Jesse, I observed the anecdote of the landrail, taken from the Book of the Seasons (p. 223), without any acknowledgment whence it came, and probably without his knowing it.

I am bound to notice these facts, for the mainten-

ance of literary right. If such a system be permitted with impunity, it will soon become necessary to set up warning boards against trespassers in books as well as in gardens and grounds. It is pleasant enough to see one's self quoted,—not *quite* so pleasant to see one's self plundered. I am perfectly sensible of the compliment of being quoted; but it ceases to be a compliment when unaccompanied by a fair acknowledgment. But enough: I make these remarks reluctantly, and I trust that I shall not have occasion to renew the subject; but rather that opportunity will be offered me, from time to time, to remove any errors that may have crept into this work, and to render it, by additional information, a perfect portraiture of English country life.

My object in these volumes has been to present to the reader a view of the Rural Life of England at the present period, as seen in all classes and all parts of the country. For this purpose I have not merely depended upon my acquaintance with rural life, which has been that of a great portion of my own life from boyhood, but I have literally travelled, and a great deal of it on foot, from the Land's-End to the Tweed, penetrating into the retirements, and witnessing the domestic life of the country in primitive seclusions and under rustic roofs. If the mountains and valleys, the fair plains and sea-coasts, the halls and farm-houses, the granges, and cottages of shepherds, miners, peasants, or fishermen, be visited in these volumes with a tenth part of the enjoyment

with which I have visited them in their reality, they must be delightful books indeed; for no moments of my existence have been more deliciously spent, than those in which I have wandered from spot to spot of this happy and beautiful island, surveying its ancient monuments, and its present living men and manners.

It will be seen on the title-page, that the embellishments of these volumes are both designed and engraved by Samuel Williams: the only exceptions being, that I am indebted to our accomplished friend Miss Twamley, of Birmingham, for the sketch on the title-page of the first volume; and for those of the Charcoal-burner's Hut, and Morgan Lewis's last View of the Fairies, to our excellent young friend Miss Tregellis, of Neath Abbey. The embellishments altogether must, I think, for their beauty and spirit, excite general admiration.

W. H.

West-end Cottage, Esher, Surrey,
November 21*st*, 1837.

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RURAL LIFE, PURSUITS, AND ADVANTAGES OF THE GENTRY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

PRE-EMINENCE OF ENGLAND AS A PLACE OF COUNTRY RESIDENCE.

LET every man who has a sufficiency for the enjoyment of life, thank heaven most fervently that he lives in this country and age. They may tell us of the beauty of southern skies, and the softness of southern climates; but where is the land which a man would rather choose to call himself a native of—because it

combines more of the requisites for a happy and useful existence; more of the moral, social, and intellectual advantages, without which fair skies or soft climates would become dolorous, or at best, indifferent? I say, let every man gratefully rejoice, who has the means of commanding the full blessings of English life,—for alas! there are thousands and millions of our countrymen who possess but a scanty portion of these; whose lives are too long and continuous a course of toil and anxiety to permit them even to look round them and see how vast are the powers of enjoyment in this country, and how few of those sources of ease, comfort, and refined pleasure are within their reach. I trust a better day is coming to this portion of our population; that many circumstances are working together to confer on the toiling children of these kingdoms the social rewards which their unwearied industry so richly merits; but for those who already hold in their hands the golden key, where is the country like England? If we are naturally proud of making portion of a mighty and a glorious kingdom, where is the kingdom like England? It is a land of which the most ambitious or magnanimous spirit may well say with a high emotion—"That is my country!" Over what an extent of the earth it stretches its territories; over what swarming and diversified millions it extends its sceptre! On every side of the globe, lie its outspread regions; under every aspect of heaven, walk its free or tributary people. In the West Indies; in the vaster dominions of the East; in America and Australia; through each wide continent, and many a fair island! But its political and moral power extends even far beyond these. What nation is there, however great,

that does not look with breathless anxiety to the movements of England; what country is not bound up with it in the strongest interests and hopes; what country is there which does not feel the influence of its moral energy? Through all the cities and forests of Republican America, the spirit of England, as well as its language, lives and glows. France, Germany, and even Russia to the depths of its frozen heart, feel the emanations of its free and popular institutions. Every pulse of love which beats here—every principle of justice that is more clearly recognized—every sentiment of Christianity that is elevated on the broad basis of the human heart, hence spreads through the earth as from a centre of moral life, and produces in the remotest regions its portion of civilization.

> Hence do I love my country!—and partake
> Of kindred agitations for her sake;
> She visits oftentimes my midnight dream;
> Her glory meets me with the earliest beam
> Of light, which tells that morning is awake.

It is something to make a part, however small, of such a nation. It is something to feel that you have such a scope of power and beneficence in the earth. But when you add to this, the food laid up for the heart and the intellect in this island—the wealth of literature and science; the spirit of freedom in which they are nourished, and by which they are prosecuted; the sound religious feeling which has always distinguished it as a nation; the philanthropic institutions that exist in it—every true heart must felicitate itself that its lot is cast in this kingdom.

Such are the moral, political, and intellectual advantages of English life, which must make any noble-

minded and reflecting man feel, as he considers his position in the scale of humanity, that he is "a citizen of no mean city:" but our social advantages are not a whit behind these. Can any state of society be well conceived on which the arts and sciences, literature, and general knowledge can shed more social conveniences and refined enjoyments? In our houses, in our furniture, in all the materials for our dresses, in the apparatus for our tables and the endless variety of good things by which they are supplied, for which every region has been traversed, and every art in bringing them home, or raising them at home, has been exerted; in books and paintings; in the wonderful provision and accumulation of every article in our shops, that the real wants or the most fanciful desires of men or women may seek for; in our gardens, roads, the beautiful and affluent cultivation of the country,—what nation is there, or has there been, which can for a moment bear a comparison with England?

Ye miserable ancients, had ye these?

And this we may ask, not merely as it respects gas, steam, the marvellous developements of chemistry and electro-magnetism, by which the mode and embellishment of our existence have been so much changed already, and which promise yet, changes too vast to be readily familiarised to the imagination,—but of a thousand other privileges and conveniences in which England is pre-eminent. It is, however, to our rural life that we are about to devote our attention; and it is in rural life that the superiority of England is, perhaps, more striking, than in any other

respect. Over the whole face of our country the charm of a refined existence is diffused. There is nothing which strikes foreigners so much as the beauty of our country abodes, and the peculiarity of our country life. The elegancies, the arts and refinements of the city are carried out and blended, from end to end of the island, so beautifully with the peaceful simplicity of the country, that nothing excites more the admiration of strangers than those rural paradises, the halls, castles, abbeys, lodges, and cottages in which our nobility and gentry spend more or less of every year. Let Prince Pückler Muskaw, Washington Irving, Willis, Count Pecchio, Rice, and others, tell you how beautiful, in their eyes, appeared the parks, lawns, fields, and the whole country of England, cultivated like a garden. It is true that our climate is not to be boasted of for its perpetual serenity. It has had no lack of abuse, both from our own countrymen and others. We are none of us without a pretty lively memory of its freaks and changes, its mists and tempests; its winters wild as the last, and its springs that are often so late in their arrival, that they find summer standing in the gate to tell them they are no longer wanted. All this we know; yet which of us is not ready to forgive all this, and to say with a full heart,

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!"

Which of us is not grateful and discerning enough to remember, that even our fickle and imperfect climate has qualities to which England owes much of its glory, and we, many a proud feeling and victo-

rious energy? Which of us can forget, that this abused climate, is that which has not enervated by its heats, has not seduced by its amenities, has not depopulated by its malaria, so that under its baneful influence we have become feeble, listless, reckless of honour or virtue; the mean, the slothful, the crouching slaves of barbarians, or even effeminate despots: it is that which has done none of these things; produced no such effects as these; but it is that which has raised millions of frames strong and muscular and combatant, and enduring as the oaks of its rocky hills; that has nerved those frames to the contempt alike of danger and effeminacy; and has quickened them with hearts full of godlike aspirations after a virtuous glory. What a long line—what ages after ages, of invincible heroes, of dauntless martyrs for freedom and religion, of solemn sages and lawgivers, of philosophers and poets, men sober, and prescient, and splendid in all their endowments as any country ever produced;—what a line of these has flourished amid the glooms and severities of this abused climate; and while Italy has sunk into subjection, and Greece has lain waste beneath the feet of the Turk—has piled up by a succession of matchless endeavours the fame and power of England, to the height of its present greatness.

> In our halls is hung
> Armoury of the invincible knights of old:
> We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held. In everything we are sprung
> Of earth's best blood, have titles manifold.

And will any man tell me that the spirit of our

climate, has had nothing to do with begetting and nourishing the energy which has borne on to immortality these great men; which has quickened us with "earth's best blood;" which has given us "titles manifold?" The gloom and desolate majesty of autumn—the wild magnificence of thunder-storms, with their vivid lightnings, their awful uproar, the lurid darkness of their clouds, and the outshining of rainbows—have these had no effect on the meditations of divines and the songs of poets? Has the soul-concentrating power of winter driven our writers into their closets in vain? Have the fireside festivities of our darkest season; has the blazing yule-clog, and the merriment of the old English hall—things which have grown out of the very asperity of the climate, left no traces in our literature? Did Milton, Bacon, Spenser, Shakspeare, and such spirits, walk through our solemn halls, whether of learning, or religion, or baronial pomp, all of which have been raised by the very genius of a pensive climate; or did they climb our mountains, and roam our forests, amid winds that roared in the boughs and whirled their leaves at their feet, and gather thence no imagery, no similies, no vigour of thought and language, such as still skies and flowery meadows could not originate? Let us turn to the lays and romances of Scott and Byron, and see whether brown heaths and splintered mountains; the savage ruins of craggy coasts, moaning billows, mists, and rains; the thunder of cataracts, and the sleep of glens, all seen and felt under the alternations of seasons and of weather, such only as an unsettled climate could show, have not tinged their spirits, and therefore their works, with hues of

an immortal beauty, the splendid product of a boisterous climate. Why they are these influences, which have had no small share in the creation of such men as Burns, Bloomfield, Hogg, and Clare—the shepherd-poets of a free land, and an out-of-door life. Yes, we are indebted to our climate for a mass of good, a host of advantages of which we little dream, till we begin to count them up.

And are all our experiences of the English climate those of gloom? Are there no glorious sunsets, no summer evenings, balmy as our dreams of heaven, no long sunny days of summer, no dewy mornings, whose freshness brings with it ideas of earth in its youth, and the glades of Paradise trod by the fair feet of Eve? Have we no sweet memories of youth and friendship, in which such hours, such days, in which fields of harvest, hay-harvest and corn-harvest, with all their rejoicing rustic companies, lie in the sunshine? Are there none of excursions through the mountains, along sea shores, of sailing on fair lakes, or lying by running waters in green and flowery dales, while over-head shone out skies so blue and serene that they seemed as though they could never change? In every English bosom there lie many such sweet memories; and if we look through the whole of one of the worst seasons that we have, what intervals of pleasant weather we find in it. One of the great charms of this country too, dependent on its climate, is that rich and almost perpetual greenness, of which strangers always speak with admiration.

But what of climate? There are other claims on our affections for this noble country, which were its climate the most splendid under heaven, would yet

cast it far into the shade. That which binds us closely to it, next to our living ties, is that every inch of English ground is sanctified by noble deeds, and intellectual renown; but on this topic Mrs. Howitt has, in her Wood-Leighton, put into the mouth of a worthy clergyman of Staffordshire, words that will better express my feelings, than any I can now use.

"I know not how it is; I cannot comprehend the feeling, with which many quit this noble country for ever for strange lands. And yet it may be said, that hundreds do it every day; and for thousands it may indeed be well. For those who have had no prospect but the daily struggle for existence; for those whose minds have not been opened and quickened into a sense of the higher and more spiritual enjoyments which this country affords; for the labouring many, the valleys of Australia, or the vast forests and prairies of America may be alluring. But to me,—and therefore, it seems, equally to other men with like tastes and attachments—to quit England, noble, fearless, magnanimous and Christian England, would be to cut asunder life, and hope, and happiness at once. No! till I voyage to "the better land," I could never quit England. What! after all the ages that have been spent in making it habitable and home-like; after all the blood shed in its defence, and for the maintaining of its civil polity; after all the consumption of patriotic thought and enterprise, the labours of philosophers, divines, and statesmen, to civilize and Christianize it; after the time, the capital, the energies employed, from age to age, to cultivate its fields, dry up marshes, build bridges, and lay down roads, raise cities, and fill every house with the pro-

ducts of the arts and the wealth of literature; can there be a spot of earth that can pretend to a tithe of its advantages, or a spot that creates in the heart that higher tone necessary for their full enjoyment? Why, every spot of this island is sanctified, not only by the efforts of countless patriots, but as the birth-place and abode of men of genius. Go where you will, places present themselves to your eyes which are stamped with the memory of some one or other of those "burning and shining lights," that have illuminated the atmosphere of England with their collective splendour, and made it visible to the men of farthest climates. Even in this secluded district, which, beautiful as it is, is comparatively little known or spoken of, amongst the generality of English people, how many literary recollections surround you! To say nothing of the actors in great historical scenes; the Talbots, Shrewsburys, Dudleys, and Bagots of former ages; or the Ansons, Vernons, St. Vincents, and Pagets of the later and present ones; in this county were born those excellent bishops, Hurd and Newton, and the venerable antiquary and herald, Elias Ashmole. To say nothing of the quantity of taste and knowledge that exist in the best classes of society hereabout, we have to-day passed the houses of Thomas Gisborne and Edward Cooper, clergymen who have done honour to their profession by their talents, and the liberality of their sentiments. In that antiquated Fauld Hall, once lived old Squire Burton, the brother of the author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy;" and there is little doubt that some part of that remarkable work was written there. By that Dove, Izaak Walton, that pious old man, that lover of the fields, and his-

torian of the worthies of the church, used to stroll and meditate, or converse with his friend Charles Cotton, a Staffordshire man too. In the woods of Wootton, which are very visible hence by daylight, once wandered a very different, but very distinguished person, the wayward Rousseau. In Uttoxeter, that great, but ill-used, and ill-understood astronomer, Flamstead, received the greater part of his education; and from Lichfield, the spires of whose cathedral we have seen to-day, went out Johnson and Garrick, each to achieve supremacy in his own track of distinction. And there, too, lived Anna Seward, who, with all her egotism and faults of taste, was superior to the women of her age, and had the sagacity to perceive amongst the very first, the dawning fame of Southey and Sir Walter Scott.

"If this comparatively obscure district can thus boast of having given birth or abode to so many influential intellects, what shall not England—entire and glory-crowned England? And who shall not feel proud to own himself of its race and kindred; and, if he can secure for himself a moderate share of its common goods, be happy to live and die in it!"

Thus it is all England through. There is no part of it, in which you do not become aware that there some portion of our national glory has originated. The very coachmen as you traverse the highways, continually point out to you spots made sacred by men and their acts. There say they, was born, or lived Milton or Shakspeare, Locke or Bacon, Pope or Dryden; that was the castle of Chaucer; there, now, lives Wordsworth, Southey, or Moore. There Queen Elizabeth was confined in her youth, here she

confined Mary of Scotland in her age. There Wickliffe lived, and here his ashes were scattered in the air by his enemies. There Hooker watched his sheep while he pondered on his Ecclesiastical Polity. Here was born Cromwell, or Hampden — here was the favourite retreat of Chatham, Fox, Pitt, or other person, who in his day exerted a powerful influence on the mind or fortunes of this country. These perpetual monitions that we are walking in a land filled from end to end with glorious reminiscences, make country-residence in England so delightful. But the testimony of foreigners is more conclusive than our own; and therefore, we will close this chapter with the impression which the entrance into England made on two Americans — Washington Irving and Mr. Willis. Irving's mind was full of the inspiration of the character of England as he had found it in books. "There is to an American, a volume of associations with the very name. It is the land of promise, teeming with every thing of which his childhood has heard, or on which his studious years have pondered. The ships of war, that prowled like guardian giants along the coast; the headlands of Ireland, stretching out into the Channel; the Welsh mountains, towering into the clouds; all were objects of intense interest. As we sailed up the Mersey, I reconnoitred the shores with a telescope. My eye dwelt with delight on neat cottages, with their trim shrubberies and green grass-plots. I saw the mouldering ruin of an abbey overrun with ivy, and the taper spire of a village church rising from the brow of a neighbouring hill—all were characteristic of England." That is the feeling of an American, arriving

here directly from his own country: this is that of one coming from the European Continent. Mr. Willis says, on landing at Dover: "My companion led the way to an hotel, and we were introduced by *English* waiters (I had not seen such a thing in three years, and it was quite like being waited on by gentlemen) to two blazing coal fires in the coffee-room of the 'Ship.' O, what a comfortable place it appeared! A rich Turkey carpet snugly fitted; nicely rubbed mahogany tables; the morning papers from London; bell-ropes that *would* ring the bell; doors that *would* shut; a landlady that spoke English, and was kind and civil; and, though there were eight or ten people in the room, no noise above the rustle of a newspaper, and positively rich red damask curtains, neither second-hand nor shabby, to the windows! A greater contrast than this, to the things that answer to them on the Continent, could scarcely be imagined. The fires were burning brilliantly, and the coffee-room was in the nicest order when we descended to our breakfast at six the next morning. The tea-kettle singing on the hearth, the toast was hot, and done to a turn, and the waiter was neither sleepy nor uncivil—all, again, very unlike a morning at an hotel in *La belle* France. England is described always very justly, and always in the same words, 'it is all one garden.' There is scarce a cottage, between Dover and London (seventy miles) where a poet might not be happy to live. I saw a hundred little spots I coveted with quite a heart-ache. Everybody seemed employed, and every body well-made and healthy. The relief from the deformity and disease of the way-side beggars of the Continent was very striking."

It is through this England, thus worthy of our love, whether as seen by our own eyes, or the eyes of intelligent foreigners, that we are about to make our progress, visiting plain and mountain, farm and hamlet, and making acquaintance with the dwellings, habits, and feelings of both gentle and simple.

CHAPTER II.

ENVIABLE POSITION OF THE ENGLISH COUNTRY GENTLEMAN, AS REGARDS ALL THE PLEASURES AND ADVANTAGES OF LIFE.

Alexander of Macedon said if he were not Alexander, he would choose to be Diogenes; Alexander of Russia also said if he were not Alexander, he would choose to be an English gentleman. And truly, it would require some ingenuity to discover any earthly lot like that of the English gentleman. The wealth and refinement at which this country has arrived, have thrown round English rural life every possible charm. Every art and energy is exerted in favour of the English gentleman. Look at the ancient castle, or the mansion of later ages, and then at the dwelling of the private gentleman now, and what a difference! The castle with its dungeon-like apartments, its few loop-holes for windows, its walls, mounds, moats, drawbridges, and other defences to keep out the hostile prowlers that a semi-savage state of society brought, ever and anon, around it. Look at its naked walls, its massy, lumbering doors, its floors spread with rushes, and the rude style in which bed and board were constructed and served; and then turn your eyes

on the modern mansion of the country gentleman! What a lovely sight is that! What a bright and pleasant abode, instead of that heavy, martial pile. What a fair country—what a peaceful, well-ordered population surround it, instead of dreary forests, and savage hordes! And look again at the mansion of the feudal ages; see its large, cheerless, tapestried halls, its ill-fitting doors and windows, through which the wintry winds come whistling and careering. What naked, or rush-strewn floors still; what rude fashion of furniture, and vessels for the table; what a rude style of cookery; what a dearth of books; what a miserable and scanty display of portraits on the walls, making those they are intended to represent, look grim and hard as a generation of ogres. Then again, look at the modern mansion. What a snug and silken nest of delight is that. See what the progress of the arts and civilization has done for it. How light and airily it rises in some lovely spot. How it is carpeted and draped with rich hangings and curtains. What soft and elegant beds: what a superior grace in the fashion of furniture, and all household utensils. Silver and gold, brass and steel, porcelain and glass, into what rich and beautiful shapes have they been wrought by skilful hands for all purposes. See what a variety of rooms; what a variety of inventions in those rooms, which artificial and refined wants have called into existence. What books enrich the fair library; what glorious paintings grace its delicately papered walls. Hark! music is issuing from instruments of novel and most ingenious construction. And all around what a splendidly cultivated country! What lovely gardens, in which flowers from every region are blowing. Here

is a vast change!—a vast advance from the rude life of our ancestors; and the more we look into the present state of domestic life, the more we shall perceive the admirable perfection of its economy and arrangements. What was the life of our great nobility formerly in their country halls? With little intercourse with the capital; in the midst of huge forests, and almost impassable roads; hunting and carousing were their chief pleasures and employments, amid a throng of rude retainers. Look now at the mode of life of a private gentleman of no extraordinary revenue. When he comes down in a morning he finds on his breakfast-table the papers which left London probably on the previous evening, bringing him the news of the whole world. There is nothing which is going on in Parliament, in the courts of law, in public meetings in the capital, or in any town of the kingdom, no birth, marriage, death, or any occurrence of importance, but they are all laid before him; there is nothing done or said in the mercantile, the literary, the scientific world, nothing which can affect the interests of his country in the most remote degree; nothing, indeed, which can thoroughly affect the well-being of men all the world over, but there it is too. He sits in the midst of his woods and groves, in the quietness of the country a hundred miles from the capital, and is as well acquainted with the movements and incidents of society as a reigning prince could have been some years ago, by couriers, correspondents, spies, fast-sailing packets, and similar agencies, maintained by all the aid and revenues of a nation. And for his morning meal, China and the Indies, east and west, send him their tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, and

preserved fruits. Lapland sends its reindeer tongues; Westphalia its hams; and his own rich land abundance of rural dainties. When breakfast is over, if he ask himself how he shall pass the day, what numerous and inexhaustible resources present themselves to his choice. Will he have music? The ladies of his family can give it him in a high style of excellence. Does he love paintings? His walls, and those of his wealthy neighbours are covered with them. There are said to be more of the works of the great Masters accumulated in our English houses than in all the world besides. Is he fond of books? What a mass of knowledge is piled up around him! Greece, Rome, Palestine, Arabia, India, France, Germany, Italy, every country, ancient or modern, which has distinguished itself by its genius and intelligence, has poured into his halls its accumulated wealth of heart and imagination. There is hoarded up in his library food for the most insatiate spirit for an eternity. In the literature and science merely of this country, he possesses more than the enjoyment of a life. Think only of the works of our historians and divines, of our travellers,—our natural, moral, and scientific philosophers; of the wit, the pathos, the immense extent of inventions and facts in our general literature; of the glorious and ennobling themes of our great poets. What a mighty difference is there between the existence of one of our old baronial ancestors, who could not read, but as he sate over his winter fire solaced his spirit with the lays of a wandering minstrel; and of him who has at his command all the intellectual splendour, power and wit, the satire, the joyous story, the humour, the elegance of phrase and of mind, the pro-

found sentiment and high argument of such men as Chaucer, Milton, Shakspeare, Spenser, Addison, Steele, Pope, Dryden, Ben and Sam Johnson, Goldsmith, Beaumont and Fletcher, Cowper, and the noble poets of the present day. Is it possible that *ennui* can come near a man who can at any moment call to his presence our Jeremy Taylors and Tillotsons, our Barrows, Burnets, and Stillingfleets—our travellers from every corner of the earth, and our great novelists with their everlasting inventions? Why, there is more delight in one good country library, than any one mortal life can consume. If a man's house were situated in a desert of sand, the magic of this divine literature were enough to raise around him an elysium of perpetual greenness.

But it is not merely within-doors that the singular privileges of an English gentleman lie. He need only step out, and he sees them surrounding him on every side. His gardens, by the labours and discoveries of centuries, by the genius of some men who have blended the spirit of nature most happily with that of art, and by the researches of others who have collected into this country the vegetable beauty and wealth of the whole world, have been made more delightful than those of Alcinous or Armida. Look at his glazed walls, his hot and green houses, which supply his table with the most delicious dessert. But go on,—advance beyond the boundaries of his gardens, and the pleasant winding walks of his shrubberies, and where are you? In the midst of his park, his farms, his woods, and plantations. Now every one knows the healthful and perpetual recreation to be found in any one of these places; the intense delight which

many of our country gentlemen take in them, and the beauty and pre-eminence of our English parks, farms, and woods, in consequence. We shall speak more particularly of them presently; but it must not here be forgotten what a boundless field of enjoyment, and increase of wealth, science has of late years opened to the amateur farmer, and to the country gentlemen in general. To their fields, agricultural chemistry, mineralogy, botany, vegetable physiology, entomology, etc. have brought new and inexhaustible charms. They have, in a manner, enlarged the territories of the smallest proprietor into kingdoms of boundless extent and interest. In the study of soils, their defects and remedies; in the selection of plants most consonant to the earth in which they are to grow, or the adaptation of the earth to them; in the inquiry into the mineral wealth that lies below the surface; in cultivating an acquaintance with the various animals and especially insects, on whose presence or absence depends in a great degree the proper growth or destruction of crops and young woods: in all these the country gentleman has a source of noble and profitable employment for the main part unknown to his ancestors, and worthy of his most earnest pursuit.

But if all these means of happiness were not enough to satisfy his desires, or did not chime in with his taste, see what another field of animating and praiseworthy endeavour lies before him still, in the official service of his country. Retaining his character of a country gentleman, he can accept the office of a magistrate, and become, if so disposed, a real benefactor and peace-maker to his neighbourhood.

But he need not stop here. There is no country, not excepting British America, where the path of public service lies so open to a man of fortune, or is so wide in its reach. He can enter parliament; and residing part of the year in the country, can during the other part take his place in an assembly, that for the importance of its discussions and acts has no fellow; for there is no other legislative assembly in the whole world where, with similar freedom of constitution, the same mighty mass of human interests is concerned—to which the same vast extent of influence is appended. I need do no more in proof of this, than merely point to the position of England amid the nations of the earth; her wealth and activity at home; her enormous territories abroad. Over all this,—over this extent of country, over these millions of beings, there is not a single country gentleman who has the ambition, but who may be called to exercise an influence. Here is a field of labour, enough of itself to fill the amplest desires, and by which, if he have the talent, any man of fortune may rise to the highest pitch of rank and distinction.

But if the country gentleman have not the ambition, or the love of so active a life; if he desire to enjoy himself in a different way, there is yet abundant choice. He may travel, if he please; and what a rich expanse of pleasures and interests lies before him in that direction. In our own islands there is a variety of scenery not to be rivalled in the same space in any other part of the world. The mountains, the lakes, the rivers of Wales, Scotland, Ireland, those of Cumberland and Derbyshire; the rich plains; the busy cities, with all their arts and curious manufactures;

our ports, with all their interesting scenes; the various historical and antiquarian objects; the numerous breeds of cattle, sheep, and horses; the varied kinds of vegetable products, and modes of farming;—these, to a mind of any taste and intelligence, offer plentiful matter of observation in short summer excursions. And what splendid roads, fleet horses, convenient carriages and excellent inns, are ready to convey him on the way, or receive him for refreshment. If he is disposed to go abroad, who has the money, or the education, to give facility and advantage to travel in every region like the English gentleman?—Such are the privileges and pleasures attendant on the country gentleman of England. In all these he has, or may have, the society of women whose beauty and intelligence are everywhere acknowledged; and for the ladies of England living in the country, there are books, music, the garden, the conservatory—an abundance of elegant and womanly occupations. There are drives through woods and fields of the most delicious character; there is social intercourse with neighbouring wealthy families, and a host of kind offices to poor ones, which present the sweetest sources of enjoyment.

I think the extraordinary blessings and privileges of English rural life have never been sufficiently considered. It is only when we begin to count them up that we become aware of their amount, and surpassing character. What is there of divine sentiment or earthly knowledge, of physical, intellectual, or religious good; what is there of generous, social, reflective, retiring or aspiring; what is there of freshness and beauty; of luxurious in life, or preparatory to a peaceful death; what is there that can purify the

spirit, ennoble the heart, and prompt men to a wise and extensive beneficence, which may not be found in English rural life? It has everything in it which is beautiful, and may become glorious and godlike.

Such golden deeds lead on to golden days,
Days of domestic peace—by him who plays
On the great stage how uneventful thought;
Yet with a thousand busy projects fraught,
A thousand incidents that stir the mind
To pleasure, such us leaves no sting behind!
Such as the heart delights in—and records
Within how silently—in more than words!
A Holiday—the frugal banquet spread
On the fresh herbage, near the fountain-head.
With quips and cranks—what time the woodlark there
Scatters his loose notes on the sultry air,
What time the king-fisher sits hushed below,
Where silver-bright the water-lilies blow:—
A Wake—the booths whitening the village green,
Where Punch and Scaramouch aloft are seen;
Sign beyond sign in close array unfurled,
Picturing at large the wonders of the world;
And far and wide, over the Vicar's pale,
Black hoods and scarlet crossing hill and dale,
All, all abroad, and music in the gale:—
A Wedding Dance—a dance into the night,
On the barn-floor, when maiden feet are light;
When the young bride receives the promised dower,
And flowers are flung, herself a fairer flower:
A Morning-visit to the poor man's shed,
(Who would be rich while one was wanting bread?)
Where all are emulous to bring relief,
And tears are falling fast—but not for grief:—
A Walk in Spring—GRATTAN, like those with thee
By the heath-side (who had not envied me?)
When the sweet limes, so full of bees in June,
Led us to meet beneath their boughs at noon:
And thou didst say which of the great and wise,
Could they but hear and at thy bidding rise,
Thou would'st call up and question.

Graver things
Come in their turn. Morning and evening brings
Its holy office; and the sabbath bell,
That over wood and wild, and mountain-dell,
Wanders so far, chasing all thoughts unholy,
With sounds most musical, most melancholy,
Not on his ear is lost. Then he pursues
The pathway leading through the aged yews,
Nor unattended; and when all are there,
Pours out his spirit in the House of Prayer,—
That House with many a funeral-garland hung,
Of virgin white—memorials of the young;
The last yet fresh when marriage chimes were ringing,
And hope and joy in other hearts were springing;—
That House where age led in by filial love,—
Their looks composed, their thoughts on things above,
The world forgot, or all its wrongs forgiven—
Who would not say they trod the path to Heaven?

Rogers' Human Life.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE OF THE GENTRY IN THE COUNTRY.

One of the chief features of the life of the nobility and gentry of England, is their annual visit to the metropolis; and it is one which has a most essential influence upon the general character of rural life itself. The greater part of the families of rank and fortune, flock up to town annually, as punctually as the Jews flocked up to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover; and it may be said for the purpose of worship too, though worship of a different kind—that of fashion. A considerable portion of them being, more or less, connected with one or other House of Parliament, go up at the opening of Parliament, generally in February, and remain there till the adjournment, often in July; but the true season does not commence till April.

> When April verdure springs in Grosvenor Square,
> Then the furred beauty comes to winter there.—*Rogers.*

Much has been said of the evil effect of this aristocratic habit, of spending so much time in the metropolis; of the vast sums there spent in ostentatious rivalry, in equipage and establishments; in the dissipations of theatres, operas, routes, and gaming-

houses; and unquestionably, there is much truth in it. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that this annual assembling together has some advantages. A great degree of knowledge and refinement results from it, amid all the attendant folly and extravagance. The wealthy are brought into contact with vast numbers of their equals and superiors, and that sullen and haughty habit of reserve is worn off, which is always contracted by those who live in solitary seclusion, in the midst of vast estates, with none but tenants and dependents around them. They are also brought into contact with men of talent, and intelligence. They move amongst books and works of art, and are induced by different motives to become patrons and possessors of these things. If they spend large sums in splendid houses and establishments in town, such houses and such establishments become equally necessary to them in the country; and it is by this means that, instead of old and dreary castles and chateaus, we have such beautiful mansions, so filled with rich paintings and elegant furniture, dispersed all over England. From these places, as centres existing here and there, similar tastes are spread through the less wealthy classes, and the elegancies of life flow into the parsonages, cottages, and abodes of persons of less income and less intercourse with society. In town, undoubtedly, a vast number of the aristocracy spend their time and money very foolishly; but it is equally true, that many others spend theirs very beneficially to the country. Men of fortune from all quarters of the kingdom there meet, and everything which regards the improvement of their estates is discussed. They

hear of different plans pursued in different parts of the kingdom. They make acquaintances, and these acquaintances lead to visits, in which they observe, and copy all that can add to the embellishment of their abodes, and the value and productiveness of their gardens and estates. If many acquire a relish only for Newmarket, and the gaming club, and a strong distaste for the quiet enjoyments of the country; many, on the other hand, come down to their estates after a season of hurry and over-excitement, with a fresh feeling for the beauty and repose of their country abodes. The possessors of great houses and estates, invite a party to spend the recess, or especially, the shooting season with them. Thus the world of fashion is broken up and scattered from the metropolis into a multitude of lesser circles, and into every corner of the empire. I can conceive nothing which bears on its surface the aspect of the perfection of human society, so much as this assembling of a choice party of those who have nothing to do but to enjoy life, in the house of some hospitable wealthy man, in some one of the terrestrial paradises of this kingdom,—far off, in some retired vale of England, where the country and its manners remain almost as simple and picturesque as they did ages ago. In some fine Elizabethan mansion, some splendid baronial castle, as Warwick, Alnwick, or Raby; or in some rich old abbey; amid woods and parks, or seated on one of our wild coasts; or amid the mountains of Wales or Scotland, with all their beautiful scenery, rocks, hanging cliffs, dashing water-falls, rapid rivers, and fairy wildernesses around them. Here, assembled from the crush and rush of London

in its fulness, with new books and new music brought down with them; with plenty of topics suggested by the incidents of the past season in the saloons of the fashionable, and in parliament; with every luxury before them; with fine shrubberies and parks, and with every vehicle and facility for riding and driving through field or forest, or sailing on river or ocean; if people are not happy in such circumstances, where is the fault?

And imagine the possessor of a noble estate coming down to receive his friends there. To a high and generous mind there must be something very delightful. When he enters his own neighbourhood, he enters his own kingdom. The very market-town through which he last passes, is probably, totally or three-fourths of it his property. If he be a kind and liberal man, the respect which is there testified towards him, has in it the most cordial of flatteries. When he touches his own land, everything acknowledges his absolute sway. On all sides he sees symptoms of welcome. Wherever he looks, they are the woods, the parks, the fields of his ancestors, and now his own, that meet his eyes. The freshness and greenness of the fields, the sombre grandeur of the woods, the peaceful elegance of his house, all the odours of flowers breathing through the rooms, and the sight of rich fruits on his walls and in his hot-houses; after the heat, dust, crowding, noise, political contention, and turning night into day, of London, must be peculiarly grateful. Here he is sole lord and master; and from him, he feels, flow the good of his dependent people, and the pleasures of his distinguished guests. The same where

Far to the south a mountain vale retires,
Rich in its groves, and glens, and village spires;
Its upland lawns, and cliffs with foliage hung,
Its wizard stream, nor nameless nor unsung;
And through the various year, the various day,
Where scenes of glory burst and melt away.—*Rogers.*

The hamlet, which shews its thatched roofs and lowly smoking chimneys near, is all his own; nay, the rustic church is part and parcel of the family estate. It was probably built and endowed by his ancestors. The living is in his gift, and is perhaps enjoyed by a relative, or college chum. The very churchyard, with its simple head-stones, and green mounds, is separated often only by a sunk fence from his grounds. It blends into them, and the old grey tower lifts itself amongst trees which form one majestic mass with his own. The sabbath-bell rings, and he enters that old porch with his guests; he sees the banner of some brave ancestor float above his head, and the hatchments and memorial inscriptions of others on the walls. What can be more delicately flattering to all the feelings of a human creature; what lot can be more perfect?

The ease and perfect freedom from ceremony in these rural gatherings is a feature which has always excited the admiration of foreigners. Every guest has his own apartment, where he can retire at pleasure, and after taking his meals in common can spend the day as he chooses. But, as I have before said, we see our own customs and manners better in the descriptions of foreigners, because they are described by them as they are seen, with the freshness of novelty. Prince Pückler Muskau speaks with enthusiasm of the country houses and park scenery of

England. His book, indeed, is full of such pictures of country life and scenery. The beautiful dairies which he sometimes found in noblemen's parks delighted him extremely. Thus he speaks of the one at Woburn Abbey:—"The dairy is a prominent and beautiful object. It is a sort of Chinese temple, decorated with a profusion of white marble, and coloured glasses; in the centre is a fountain, and round the walls hundreds of large dishes and bowls, of Chinese and Japan porcelain of every form and colour, filled with new milk and cream. The 'consoles' upon which these vessels stand, are perfect models for Chinese furniture. The windows are of ground-glass, with Chinese painting, which shews fantastically enough by the dim light."

But the testimony of Mr. Willis as an American, and therefore accustomed to a life and sentiment more allied to our own, is still stronger. His account of his visit to Gordon Castle is a perfect example of all such scenes, and is an exact counterpart of the German Prince's description of the English "vie de château," in his third volume, p. 311.

"The immense iron gate, surmounted by the Gordon arms; the handsome and spacious stone lodges on either side; the canonically fat porter, in white stockings and grey livery, lifting his hat as he swung open the massive portal, all bespoke the entrance to á noble residence. The road within was edged with velvet sward, and rolled to the smoothness of a terrace walk; the winding avenue lengthened away before with trees of every variety of foliage; light carriages passed me, driven by gentlemen or ladies, bound on their afternoon airing; a groom led

up and down two beautiful blood-horses, prancing along with side-saddles and morocco stirrups; and keepers with hounds and terriers, gentlemen on foot, idling along the walks, and servants in different liveries, hurrying to and fro, betokened a scene of busy gaiety before me. I had hardly noted these various circumstances, before a sudden curve in the road brought the castle into view,—a vast stone pile with castellated wings; and in another moment I was at the door, where a dozen lounging and powdered menials were waiting on a party of ladies and gentlemen to their several carriages. It was the moment for the afternoon drive.

"The last phaeton dashed away, and my chaise advanced to the door. A handsome boy, in a kind of page's dress, immediately came to the window, addressed me by name, and informed me that his Grace was out deer-shooting, but that my room was prepared, and he was ordered to wait on me. I followed him through a hall lined with statues, deers' horns, and armour, and was ushered into a large chamber looking out on a park, extending with its lawns and woods to the edge of the horizon. A more lovely view never feasted human eye.

"'Who is at the castle?' I asked, as the boy busied himself in unstrapping my portmanteau. 'O, a great many, sir'—he stopped in his occupation, and began counting on his fingers a long list of lords and ladies. 'And how many sit down to dinner?' 'Above ninety, sir, besides the Duke and Duchess.' 'That will do;' and off tripped my slender gentleman, with his laced jacket, giving the fire a terrible stir-up in his way out, and turning back to inform me that the dinner hour was seven precisely.

"It was a mild, bright afternoon, quite warm for the end of an English September, and with a fire in the room, and a soft sunshine pouring in at the windows, a seat at the open casement was far from disagreeable. I passed the time till the sun set, looking out on the park. Hill and valley lay between my eye and the horizon; sheep fed in picturesque flocks; and small fallow-deer grazed near them; the trees were planted, and the distant forest shaped by the hand of taste; and broad and beautiful as was the expanse taken in by the eye, it was evidently one princely possession. A mile from the castle-wall, the shaven sward extended in a carpet of velvet softness, as bright as emerald, studded by clumps of shrubbery, like flowers wrought elegantly in tapestry; and across it bounded occasionally a hare, and the pheasants fed undisturbed near the thickets, or a lady with flowing riding-dress and flaunting feather, dashed into sight upon her fleet blood-palfrey, and was lost the next moment in the woods, or a boy put his pony to its mettle up the ascent, or a gamekeeper idled into sight with his gun in the hollow of his arm, and his hounds at his heels. And all this little world of enjoyment and luxury and beauty lay in the hand of one man, and was created by his wealth in those northern wilds of Scotland, a day's journey almost from the possession of another human being! I never realised so forcibly the splendid results of wealth and primogeniture.

"The sun set in a blaze of fire among the pointed firs crowning the hills; and by the occasional prance of a horse's feet on the gravel, and the roll of rapid wheels, and now and then a gay laugh and many

voices, the different parties were returning to the Castle. Soon after, a loud gong sounded through the galleries, the signal to dress, and I left my musing occupation unwillingly to make my toilet for an appearance in a formidable circle of titled aristocrats, not one of whom I had ever seen, the duke himself a stranger to me, except through the kind letter of invitation lying on the table.

"I was sitting by the fire, imagining forms and faces for the different persons who had been named to me, when there was a knock at the door, and a tall, white-haired gentleman, of noble physiognomy, but singularly cordial address, entered with a broad red ribbon across his breast, and welcomed me most heartily to the castle. The gong sounded at the next moment, and in our way down, he named over his other guests, and prepared me, in a measure, for the introductions which followed. The drawing-room was crowded like a *soirée*. The duchess, a tall and very handsome woman, with a smile of the most winning sweetness, received me at the door, and I was presented successively to every person present. Dinner was announced immediately, and the difficult question of precedence being sooner settled than I had ever seen it before in so large a party, we passed through files of servants to the dining-room. It was a large and very lofty hall, supported, at the ends, by marble columns, within which was stationed a band of music playing delightfully. The walls were lined with full-length family pictures, from old knights in armour to the modern dukes in kilt of the Gordon plaid; and on the sideboards stood services of gold plate, the most gorgeously massive, and the most

beautiful in workmanship I have ever seen. There were, among the vases, several large coursing-cups, won by the duke's hounds, of exquisite shape and ornament.

"I fell into my place between a gentleman and a very beautiful woman, of perhaps, twenty-two, neither of whose names I remembered, though I had but just been introduced. The duke probably anticipated as much, and as I took my seat, he called out to me, from the top of the table, that I had on my right, Lady ——, 'the most agreeable woman in Scotland.' It was unnecessary to say that she was the most lovely.

"I have been struck everywhere in England with the beauty of the higher classes, and as I looked around me upon the aristocratic company at the table, I thought I had never seen 'Heaven's image double-stamped as man, and noble,' so unequivocally clear. * * * * The band ceased playing when the ladies left the table; the gentlemen closed up, conversation assumed a merrier cast, coffee and *liqueurs* were brought in when the wines began to be circulated more slowly, and at eleven there was a general move to the drawing-room. Cards, tea, music, filled up the time till twelve, and then the ladies took their departure, and the gentlemen sat down to supper. I got to bed somewhere about two o 'clock; and thus ended an evening, which I had anticipated as stiff and embarrassing, but which is marked in my tablets as one of the most social and kindly I have had the good fortune to record on my travels.

"I arose late in the morning, and found the large party already assembled about the breakfast table. I

was struck on entering, with the different air of the room. The deep windows opening out upon the park, had the effect of sombre landscapes in oaken frames; the troops of liveried servants, the glitter of plate, the music, that had contributed to the splendour of the scene the night before, were gone. The duke sat laughing at the head of the table, with a newspaper in his hand, dressed in a coarse shooting-jacket and coloured cravat; the duchess was in a plain morning dress and cap of the simplest character; and the high-born women about the table, whom I had left glittering with jewels and dressed in all the attractions of fashion, appeared in the simplest *coiffure* and a toilet of studied plainness. The ten or twelve noblemen present were engrossed with their letters or newspapers over tea and toast,—and in them, perhaps, the transformation was still greater. The *soigné* man of fashion of the night before, faultless in costume and distinguished in his appearance—in the full force of the term—was enveloped now in a coat of fustian, with a coarse waistcoat of plaid, a gingham cravat, and hob-nailed shoes, for shooting; and in place of the gay hilarity of the supper-table, wore a face of calm indifference, and eat his breakfast, and read the paper in a rarely broken silence. I wondered as I looked about me, what would be the impression of many people in my own country, could they look in upon that plain party, aware that it was composed of the proudest nobility and the highest fashion of England.

"Breakfast in England is a confidential and unceremonious hour, and servants are generally dispensed with. This is to me, I confess, an advantage it has over every other meal. I detest eating with twenty

tall fellows standing opposite, whose business it is to watch me. The coffee and tea were on the table, with toast, muffins, oat-cakes, marmalade, jellies, fish, and all the paraphernalia of a Scotch breakfast; and on the sideboard stood cold meats for those who liked them, and they were expected to go to it and help themselves. Nothing could be more easy, unceremonious, and affable than the whole tone of the meal. One after another rose and fell into groups in the windows, or walked up and down the long room, and, with one or two others, I joined the duke at the head of the table, who gave us some interesting particulars of the salmon-fisheries of the Spey. The privilege of fishing the river within his lands is bought of him at the pretty sum of eight thousand pounds a-year.

"The ladies went off unaccompanied to their walks in the park and other avocations; those bound for the covers, joined the game-keepers, who were waiting with their dogs in the leash at the stables; and some paired off to the billiard-room. Still suffering from lameness, I declined all invitations to the shooting parties, who started across the park, with the dogs leaping about them in a frenzy of delight, and accepted the duke's kind offer of a pony phaeton to drive down to the kennels. The duke's breed, both of setters and hounds, is celebrated throughout the kingdom. They occupy a spacious building in the centre of a wood, a quadrangle enclosing a court, and large enough for a respectable farm-house. The chief huntsman and his family, and perhaps a game-keeper or two, lodge on the premises, and the dogs are divided by palings across the court. I was rather startled to be introduced into the same enclosure with

a dozen gigantic blood-hounds, as high as my breast, the keeper's whip in my hand, the only defence. I was not easier for the man's assertion, that, without it, they would 'have the life out of me in a crack.' They came around me very quietly, and one immense fellow, with a chest like a horse, and a head of the finest expression, stood up and laid his paws on my shoulders, with the deliberation of a friend about to favour me with some grave advice. One can scarce believe that these noble creatures have not reason like ourselves. Those slender, thorough-bred heads, large, speaking eyes, and beautiful limbs and graceful action, should be gifted with more than mere animal instinct. The greyhounds were the beauties of the kennel, however; I never had seen such perfect creatures. The setters were in the next division, and really they were quite lovely. The rare tan and black dog of this race, with his silky floss hair, intelligent muzzle, good-humoured face, and caressing fondness, quite excited my admiration. There were thirty or forty of these, old and young, and a friend of the duke's would as soon ask him for a church-living as for the present of one of them. The former would be by much the smaller favour. Then there were terriers of four or five breeds, of one family of which, long-haired, long-bodied, short-legged, and perfectly white little wretches, the keeper seemed particularly fond. * * * *

"The routine of Gordon Castle was what each one chose to make it. Between breakfast and lunch, the ladies were generally invisible, and the gentlemen rode or shot, or played billiards, or kept in their rooms. At two o'clock, a dish or two of hot game

and a profusion of cold meats, were set on the small tables in the dining-room, and everybody came in for a kind of lounging half-meal, which occupied perhaps an hour. Thence all adjourned to the drawing-room, under the windows of which were drawn up carriages of all descriptions, with grooms, outriders, footmen, and saddle-horses for gentlemen and ladies. Parties were then made up for driving or riding, and from a pony-chaise to a phaeton-and-four, there was no class of vehicle which was not at your disposal. In ten minutes the carriages were usually all filled, and away they flew, some to the banks of the Spey, or the sea-side, some to the drives in the park, and with the delightful consciousness, that, speed where you would, the horizon scarce limited the possession of your host, and you were everywhere at home. The ornamental gates flying open at your approach, miles distant from the castle; the herds of red-deer trooping away from the sound of wheels in the silent park; the stately pheasants feeding tamely in the immense preserves; the hares scarcely troubling themselves to get out of the length of the whip; the stalking gamekeepers lifting their hats in the dark recesses of the forest, — there was something in this, perpetually reminding you of privileges; which, as a novelty, was far from disagreeable. I could not at the time bring myself to feel, what perhaps would be more poetical and republican, that a ride in the wild and unfenced forest of my own country would have been more to my taste.

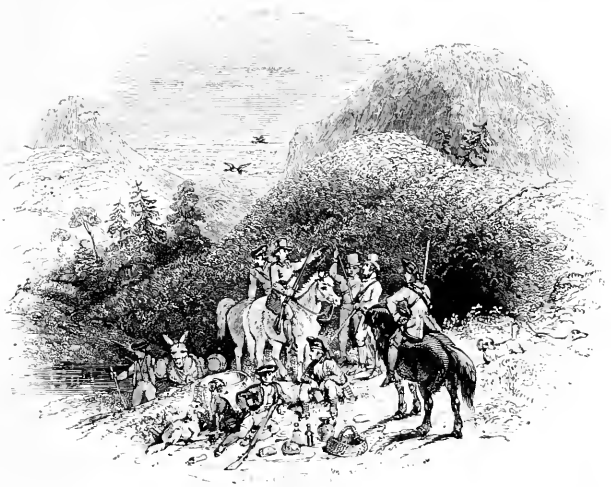
"The second afternoon of my arrival, I took a seat in the carriage with Lord A., and we followed the duchess, who drove herself in a pony-chaise, to visit

a school on the estate. Attached to a small gothic chapel, a five minutes' drive from the castle, stood a building in the same style, appropriated to the instruction of the children of the duke's tenantry. There were a hundred and thirty little creatures, from two years to five or six, and, like all infant schools, in these days of improved education, it was an interesting and affecting sight. The last one I had been in, was at Athens, and though I missed here the dark eyes and Grecian faces of the Ægean, I saw health and beauty, of a kind which stirred up more images of home, and promised, perhaps, more for the future. * * * *

"The number at the dinner-table of Gordon Castle was seldom less than thirty; but the company was continually varied by departures and arrivals. No sensation was made by either one or the other. A travelling-carriage dashed up to the door, was disburdened of its load, and drove round to the stables, and the question was seldom asked, 'Who is arrived?' You are sure to see at dinner—and an addition of half a dozen to the party, made no perceptible difference in anything. Leave-takings were managed in the same quiet way. Adieus were made to the duke and duchess, and to no one else, except he happened to encounter the parting guest upon the staircase, or were more than a common acquaintance. In short, in every way the *gêne* of life seemed weeded out, and if unhappiness or *ennui* found its way into the castle, it was introduced in the sufferer's own bosom. For me, I gave myself up to enjoyment with an *abandon* I could not resist. With kindness and courtesy in every look, the luxuries and comforts of a

regal establishment at my freest disposal; solitude when I pleased, company when I pleased,—the whole visible horizon fenced in for the enjoyment of a household, of which I was a temporary portion, and no enemy except time and the gout, I felt as if I had been spirited into some castle of felicity, and had not come by the royal mail-coach at all."

This is one of the most perfect and graphic descriptions of English aristocratical life in the country, which was ever written. It is, indeed, on the highest and broadest scale, and is not to be equalled by every country gentleman; but in kind and in degree, the same character and spirit extend to all such life, and I have therefore taken the liberty of transcribing Mr. Willis's sketch as completely as my limits would admit. Nothing, were a volume written on the subject, could bring it more palpably and correctly before the mind of the reader; and I think that if there be a perfection in human life it is to be found, so far as all the goods of providence and the easy elegancies of society can make it so, in the rural life of the English nobility and gentry.



CHAPTER IV.

THE ROUTINE OF COUNTRY SPORTS.

In my last chapter I took a view of the variety given to rural life by the annual visit to town: but if a gentleman have no desire so to vary his existence; if he love the country too well to leave it at all, most plentiful are the resources which offer themselves for pleasantly speeding on the time. If he be attached merely to field sports, not a moment of the whole year but he may fill up with his peculiar enjoyment. Racing, hunting, coursing, shooting, fishing, all offer themselves to his choice; and rural sports, as every-

thing else in English life, are so systematized; everything belonging to them is so exactly regulated; all their necessary implements and accessories, are brought to such an admirable pitch of perfection by the advancement of the arts, that the pleasures of the sportsman are rendered complete, and are diffused over every portion of the year. Field sports have long ceased to be followed in that rude and promiscuous manner which they were when forests overrun the greater part of Europe, and hunting was almost necessary to existence. Parties of hunters no longer go out with dogs of various kinds — greyhounds, hounds, spaniels, and terriers, all in leash, as our ancestors frequently did, ready to slip them on any kind of game which might present itself, and with bows also ready to make more sure of their prey. We have no battues, such as are still to be found in some parts of the continent, and which used to be the common mode of hunting in the Highlands, when the beasts of a whole district were driven into a small space, and subjected to a promiscuous slaughter; a scene such as Taylor the water-poet, describes himself as witnessing in the Braes of Mar; nor such as those perpetrated by the King of Naples in Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia, in which he killed 5 bears, 1820 boars, 1950 deer, 1145 does, 1625 roe-bucks, 1121 rabbits, 13 wolves, 17 badgers, 16,354 hares, 354 foxes, 15,350 pheasants, and 12,335 partridges. Such scenes are not to be witnessed in this country. Every field sport is here become a science. Hunting, coursing, shooting, each has its own season, its well-defined bounds, its peculiar horses, dogs, and weapons. Our horses and dogs, by long and anxious attention

to the preservation of their specific characters, and to the improvement of their breed, are become pre-eminent, each in their own department. Our sporting nobility and gentry have not contented themselves with becoming thoroughly skilful in everything relating to field diversions; but have many of them communicated their knowledge through the press to their countrymen, and have thus furnished our libraries with more practical information of this kind than ever was possessed by any one country at any one time; and contributed to make these pursuits as effective, elegant, and attractive as possible. It is not my province to go into the details of any particular sports; for them I refer the reader to Daniel, Beckford, Col. Thornton, Sir John Sebright, Col. Hawker, Tom Oakleigh, Nimrod, and the sporting magazines. My business is to shew how gentlemen may and do spend their time in the country. And in the mere catalogue of out-of-door sports, are there not racing, hunting, coursing, shooting, angling? Hawking once was an elegant addition to this list; but that has nearly fallen into disuse in this country, and may be said to exist only in the practice of Sir John Sebright, and the grand falconer of England, the Duke of St. Albans. Archery too, once the great boast of our forests, and the constant attendant on the hunt, has, as a field exercise, followed hawking. It has of late years been revived and practised by the gentry as a graceful amusement, and an occasion for assembling together at certain periods in the country; but as an adjunct of the field sports it is past for ever. Racing, every one knows, is a matter of intense interest with a great portion of the nobility, gentry,

and others; and those who delight in it, know where to find Newmarket, Epsom, Ascot Heath, Doncaster, and other places, often to their cost: almost every county and considerable town, has its course and annual races. These, however, to the country gentleman, unless he be one whose great and costly passion is for breeding and betting on race-horses, are but occasional excitements: the rest run their round of seasons as regularly as the seasons themselves; and place a lover of field sports in the country at any point of the year, and one or more of them are ready for his enjoyment. Is it winter? He has choice of all, except it be angling. Hunting, coursing, shooting, are all in their full season. Hunting, as I have said, is more confined in its range than it was anciently; but it is more regular, less fatiguing, less savage in its character, more complete in its practice and appointments. There is now neither the boar, the bear, nor the wolf to try the courage of our youth, and stag and buck hunting may be considered as rare and almost local amusements,—but we may quote the words of a great authority as to the position which hunting occupies amongst the rural sports of England. "There is certainly no country in the world, where the sport of hunting on horseback is carried to such a height as in Great Britain at the present day, and where the pleasures of a fox-chase are so well understood, and conducted on such purely scientific principles. It is considered the *beau ideal* of hunting by those who pursue it. There can be no doubt, that it is infinitely superior to stag-hunting, for the real sportsman can only enjoy that chase, when the deer is sought for, and found like other game which are pur-

sued by hounds. In the case of finding an out-lying fallow-deer, which is unharboured in this manner, great sport is frequently afforded; but this is rarely to be met with in Great Britain: so that fox-hunting is now the chief amusement of the true British sportsman: and a noble one it is—the artifices and dexterity employed by this lively, crafty animal, to avoid the dogs, are worthy of our admiration, as he exhibits more devices for self-preservation than any other beast of the chase. In many parts of this and the sister Island, hare-hunting is much followed, but fox-hunters consider it as a sport only fit for women and old men,—but, although it is less arduous than that of the fox-chase, there are charms attached to it which compensate for the hard riding of the other."

I do not enter here into the question of cruelty in this sport, nor into the other question of injury resulting from it to crops and fences, on which grounds many so strongly object to hunting, and on the former ground, indeed, to all field sports. Lord Byron, for instance, thought hunting a barbarous amusement, fit only for a barbarous country. It is not my intention to undertake the defence of this old English sport from the standing charge against it, we here have only to deal with it as a feature of rural life; and though one cannot say much in praise of its humanity, it cannot be denied that it is a pursuit of a vigorous and exciting character. A fine field of hunters in their scarlet coats, rushing over forest, heath, fence or stream, on noble steeds, and with a pack of beautiful dogs in full cry, is a very picturesque and animating spectacle.

Through the winter, then, up to the very approach

of spring, hunting offers whatever charms it possesses; pheasant, woodcock and snipe shooting, in the woods and by the streams are in all their glory. It is the time for pursuing all manner of wild fowl in fens and along the sea-coast; and if any one would know what are the eager and adventurous pleasures of that pursuit, let him join some old fowler for a week amongst the reeds of Cambridge, Huntingdon, or Lincolnshire,—now laying his traps and springes, now crouching amongst the green masses of flags and other water plants, or crawling on hand and knees for a shot at teal, widgeon, or wild duck; now visiting the decoys, or shooting right and left amongst the rising and contorting snipes. Or let him read Col. Hawker's delightful description of swivel shooting on the coasts, the mud-launchers and followers of the sea flocks by night. Those are sports that require a spice of enthusiasm and love of adventure far above the pitch of the ordinary sportsman.

When spring arrives, and warns the shooter to give rest to the creatures of his pursuit that they may pair, produce, and rear their broods; as he lays down the gun, he can take up the angle. Many a keen and devoted old sportsman, however, never knows when to lay down the gun. Though he will no longer fire at game, he likes through the spring and summer months to carry his gun on his arm through the woods, to knock down what he calls vermin,—stoats, weazels, polecats, jays, magpies, hawks, owls; all those creatures that destroy game, or their young broods, or suck their eggs. He is fond of spying out the nests of partridges and pheasants, and from time to time marking their progress. It is a grand anticipa-

tive pleasure to him when, passing along the furrow of the standing corn, his old pointer, or favourite spaniel starts the young birds just able to take the wing, and he counts them over with a silent exultation. He is fond of seeing to the training of his young dogs, of selecting fresh ones, of putting his fowling-pieces, and all his shooting gear in order. There are some old sportsmen of my acquaintance, who, during what they call this idle time, have made collections of curious birds and small animals which might furnish some facts to natural history. An old uncle of mine in Derbyshire, who has shot away a fine estate, I scarcely ever recollect to have seen out of doors without his gun; I saw him lately, when in that country, a feeble, worn-out old man, just able to totter about, but still with the gun on his arm. For those, however, who can find it in their hearts to lay aside the gun at the prescribed time, and yet long for rural sports, what can so delightfully fill up the spring and summer as the fishing rod? There is no rural art, except that of shooting, for which modern science and invention have done so much as angling. Since Izaak Walton gave such an impetus to this taste by his delicious old book, it has gradually assumed a new and fascinating character. A host of contrivances have been expended on fishing tackle. What splendid rods for simple angling, trolling, or fly-fishing, are now offered to the admiring eyes of the amateur! what a multitude of apparatus of one kind or other! what silver fish and endless artificial flies! Angling has become widened and exalted in its sphere with the general expansion of knowledge and the improvement of taste. It has associated itself with the plea-

sures and refinements of literature and poetry. All those charms which worthy Izaak threw round it, have continued to cling to it, and others have grown up around them. The love of nature, the love of travel have intertwined themselves with the love of angling. Angling has thence become, as it were, a new and more attractive pursuit—a matter of taste and science as well as of health and pleasure. It is found that it may not only be followed by the tourist without diverting him from his primal objects, but that it adds most essentially to the delights of a summer excursion. Since Wordsworth and John Wilson set up their "Angler's Tent" on the banks of Wast-Water, "at the head of that wild and solitary lake, which they had reached by the mountain path that passes Barn-Moor-Tarn from Eskdale," making an angling excursion of seven days amongst the mountains of Westmorland, Lancashire, and Cumberland, having "their tent, large panniers filled with its furniture, provisions, etc., loaded upon horses, which, while the anglers, who separated every morning, pursued each his own sport up the torrents, were carried over the mountains to the appointed place, by some lake or stream, where they were to meet again in the evening;" and

> that solitary trade,
> Mid rural peace in peacefulness pursued,
> Through rócky glen, wild moor, and hanging wood,
> White flowering meadow, and romantic glade;

since Sir Humphry Davy went angling and philosophizing in the mountain tarns, and along the trout and salmon streams not only of Scotland and Ireland, but of France and Switzerland, the enthusiasm for angling has grown into a grand and expansive

passion. We have our "Anglers in Wales," our "Anglers in Ireland;" Stephen Oliver has flourished his lines over the streams of the north, Jesse over the gentle and majestic Thames. The only wonder is, that, as our countrymen walk to and fro through all known regions of the earth, we do not hear of anglers in the Danube—the Ister—the Indus—the Joliba,—of trolling in La Plata, and fly-fishing in South Africa and Australia. All that will come in its own good time: meanwhile let us remind our country friends of the further blessings which await them, even should all the rapid streams of our mountain rivers and rivulets, Loch Leven trout, Loch Fine herrings, and salmon pulled flouncing from the crystal waters of the Teith or the Shannon, to be crimped and grilled by most delicious art, satiate them before the summer is over. The 12th of August approaches! the gun is roused from its slumber—the dogs are howling in ecstasy on their release from the kennel—the heather is burst into all its crimson splendour on the moors and the mountains, and grouse-shooting is at hand once more!

That sentence is enough to make a sportsman start to his feet if it were but whispered to him in his deepest after-dinner doze. In "The Book of the Seasons" I asserted that sportsmen felt the animating influence of nature and its beauty in their pursuits. For that passage many have been the gentle lectures of the tender-hearted; but that it was a true passage has been shewn by the thanks which many sportsmen have given me for that simple vindication, and by the repeated quotation of the whole article in their books. That they do feel it, is plainly shewn in many papers

of the sporting magazines; but nowhere more vividly than in "The Oakleigh Shooting Code." If the unction with which the paper on grouse-shooting is written in that book were more diffused through works of the like nature, vain would be all arguments to check the love of shooting. The feeling on this subject has been evidenced by the avidity with which that part of the book has been quoted far and wide. But the spirit of the picturesque is not more prominent in these chapters than in the description of Oakleigh Hall, and of the "wide-ranging treeless view of the smooth-turfed limestone hills, the white rocks breaking out in patches, so characteristic of Derbyshire."

But we are pausing on our way to the Highlands; and surely nothing can be so inspiring and exciting in the whole circle of sporting scenes as a trip to the moors and mountains of the north, in the height of summer—in the beauty of summer weather, and in the full beauty of the scenery itself. If the season is fine—the roads are dry—the walks are dry—the bogs are become, many of them, passable, the heather is in full bloom, the fresh air of the mountains, or the waters in sailing thither, the rapid changes of scene, the novel aspects of life and nature in progressing onward, by the carriage, the railway, the steamer, with all their varying groups of tourists and pleasure-seekers, of men of business and men of idleness, are full of enjoyment. To the man from the rich monotonous Lowlands, from the large town, from the heart of the metropolis perhaps, from the weary yoke of business public or private, of law, of college study, of parliament and committees, what can be more penetrating and delicious than the breathing of the

fresh buoyant air, the pleasant flitting of the breeze, the dash of sunny waters, the aspect of mountains and moors in all their shadow and gloom, or in their brightness as they rise in their clear still beauty into the azure heavens, or bask broad and brown in the noon-sun? There go the happy sportsmen; seated on the deck of some fast-sailing steamer, with human groups around them; they are fast approaching the "land of the mountain and the flood." They already seem to tread the elastic turf, to smell the heather bloom, and the peat fire of the Highland hut; to climb the moory hill, to hear the thunder of the linn, or pace the pebbly shore of the birch-skirted lake. They have left dull scenes or dry studies behind, and a volume of Walter Scott's novels is in their hands, living with all the character and traditions of the mountain-land before them. Well then, is it not a blessed circumstance that our poets and romancers have kindled the spirit of these things in the heart of our countrymen, that such places lie within our own island, and that science has so quickened our transit to them? Let us just note a few of the symptoms which shew us that this memorable 12th of August is at hand. In the market towns you see the country sportsman hastening along the streets, paying quick visits to his gunsmith, ammunition dealer, tailor, draper, etc. He is getting all his requisites together. His dogs are at his heels. Then you see him already invested in his jacket and straw hat, driving off in his gig, phaeton, or other carriage, with keeper or companion, and perhaps a couple of dogs stowed away with him. You see the keeper and the dog-cart on their way too. As you get northward these signs

thicken. In large towns, as Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, you see keeper-like looking men, with pointers and setters for sale tied up to some pallisade, or lamp-post, at the corner of a street. But woe to those who have to purchase dogs under such circumstances. It is ten to one but they are grievously gulled; or if they *should* chance to stumble upon a tolerable dog, there is not time for that mutual knowledge to grow up which should exist between the sportsman and his companion of the field. He that sees beforehand his trip to the hills, should beforehand have all in readiness: he who on a summer ramble is smitten with a sudden desire of grouse-shooting, must however, do the best he can.

When you pass into Scotland the signals of the time grow more conspicuous. In the newspapers, you see everywhere advertisements of Highland tracts to be let as shooting-grounds. When you get into the Highlands themselves, you find in all the inns maps of the neighbouring estates, divided into shooting grounds for letting. It is very probable that the income derived from this source by the Highland proprietors frequently far exceeds the rental of the same estates for the grazing of sheep and cattle. The waters and the heaths seem to be the most profitable property of a great part of the Highlands. Almost every stream and loch is carefully preserved and let as a trout or salmon fishery, many of them for enormous sums; and so far is this carried, that sportsmen who are not inclined to pay eighty or a hundred pounds a-year for a shooting ground, complain that Ireland is the only country now for shooting in any degree of freedom. Many gentlemen join at a shooting ground;

and it is a picturesque sight to see them, and their dogs and keepers, drawing towards their particular locations as the day approaches.

On the 10th of August, 1836, we sailed up the Grand Caledonian Canal from Fort William to Inverness in the steam-packet with a large party of these gentlemen. Of their number, principally military men—

Captains, and colonels, and men at arms,

some notion may be formed from the fact that we had on board upwards of seventy dogs, mostly beautiful setters; a perfect pyramid of gun-cases was piled on the deck, and dog-carts and keepers completed the scene.

One of the singular features of English life at the present moment is the swarming of summer tourists in all interesting quarters. In these Highland regions the consequent effect is often truly ludicrous. Into one miserable village, or one poor solitary inn, pour, day after day, the summer through, from seventy to a hundred people. The impossibility of such a place accommodating such a company is the first thing which strikes every one. The moment, therefore, that the vessel touches the quay, out rushes the whole throng, and a race commences to the house or village to secure beds for the night. Such is the impetus of the rush that the first arrivers are frequently driven by the "pressure from without" up the stairs to the very roof. A scene of the most laughable confusion is exhibited. All are clamouring for beds; nobody can be heard or attended to; and generally all who can, burst into rooms which are not locked up, and take forcible possession. Such scenes, any one who has

gone up this canal, or to the Western Isles must have seen,—at Oban, at Tobermory, and at Inverness, which last place boasts three inns, and where, on our arrival with a hundred fellow passengers, we found three hundred others had just landed from a London steamer! Our sportsmen, however, who were well aware of the statistics of the north, had written beforehand, and secured bed-rooms at all the sleeping places, which were duly locked up against their arrival, and they sate very composedly to witness the race of worse-informed mortals.

On this occasion a very characteristic contrast was presented between the sportsmen, and a number of students who were on board at the time. These students, many of whom spend the college recess in pedestrianizing through the Highlands, have a character almost as peculiar to themselves as the German Bürschen. In twos and threes, with their knapsacks on their backs, they may be seen rambling on, wherever there is fine scenery or spots of note to be visited. They step on board a packet at one place, and go off at another, steering away into the hills; ready to take up their quarters at such abode as may offer—the road-side inn or the smoky hut of the Gael. Wherever you see them, they are all curiosity and enthusiasm; all on fire with the sublime and beautiful—athirst for knowledge, historical, antiquarian, traditionary, botanical, geological—anything in the shape of knowledge. They are the first to climb the hill, to reach the waterfall, to crowd round every spot of tragic interest; everywhere they go agog with imagination, and everywhere they lament that they do not feel adequately, the power, and beauty, and

grandeur of the objects of their attention. Such a group we had on board. On the other hand, the sportsmen had but one object, which absorbed all their interests and faculties. They cared not at that moment for the Fall of Foyers, saw scarcely the splendid mountains and glens around. Their souls were in the brown hills of their shooting grounds—the fever of the 12th of August was upon them. They kept together, talking of guns, dogs, grouse, roebucks; all their conversation was larded and illustrated with the phraseology of their own favourite pursuit. They were, many of them, clad in a close jacket and trowsers of shepherd's tartan, with their telescope slung at their backs. They seemed to look on the students as so many hair-brained and romantic striplings—the students on them, as so many creatures of the chase. As we proceeded, the fiery Nimrods were, one after another, put out at the opening of beautiful glens, and at the foot of wild mountains where their huts lay, and the vessel received a considerable accession of silence by the departure of their keepers, who, having found a Highland piper on board, got up a dance in the steerage cabin, and kept that end of the vessel pretty well alive both day and night. Having thus brought them to their grounds, there can be no better narrator of what passes there than Thomas Oakleigh.

"On the eleventh of August, the sportsman arrives at his shooting quarters; probably some isolated tavern, 'old as the hills,'—if such a house as the grouse-shooter occasionally locates himself in, in the northern or midland counties of England, or in Scotland, where oatcake and peat supply the place of

bread and fuel, can be called a tavern. The place, humble in character, has been the immemorial resort of sportsmen in August, although during the rest of the year, sometimes many months elapse ere a customer, save some itinerant salesman calling for his mug of beer, 'darkens the door.' * * * At the house will be found all the keepers, and tenters, and poachers, and young men from the country round, assembled, amounting in the whole to not more than some eight or ten persons, all *knowing ones*, each anxious to display his knowledge of the number and locality of the broods, but each differing, wide as the poles asunder, in his statement, except on four points, in which all are agreed, viz.—*That the hatching season has been finer than was ever known before! That the broods are larger and more numerous than were ever counted before! That the birds are heavier and stronger than were ever seen before! and that they will, on the following day, lie better than they ever did on any previous opening day in the recollection of the oldest person present!* Each successive season being, in their idea, more propitious than its precursor! Anxiety and expectation are now arrived at a climax. At night, the blithe and jocund peasantry mingle with their superiors: their pursuits are for once something akin. In the field-sports they can sympathise together: the peasant and the peer associate; the ploughboy and the squire talk familiarly together; it is the privilege of the former, his prescriptive right. The circling cup, and light-hearted and hilarious laugh promiscuously go round! This night distinctions are unknown—and would that it were oftener so! * * * Long before midnight, all who can obtain beds retire, though not an eye

is drowsy. The retainers lie on sofas, elbow-chairs, or whatever else presents itself; but sleep is almost a stranger during the night. The soldier before battle, is not more anxious as to the result of the morrow, than is the sportsman on the night of the 11th of August! Morning dawns, 'and heavily with *mists* comes on the day.' The occupiers of benches and chairs are first on the alert: the landlady is called; breakfast is prepared—the dogs are looked at, all is tumult, noise, and confusion. Reckless must he be that can rest longer in bed—'the cootie moor-cocks crowsely crow;' breakfast is hastily dispatched—next is heard the howling and yelping of dogs, the cracking of whips, the snapping of locks, the charging, and flashing, and firing of guns, and every other note of preparation. The march is sounded, and away they wind for the heather and hills, true *peep-o'-day boys*, far, far from the busy, money-getting world, to breathe empyreal air; to enjoy a sport that should be monopolized by princes—if, indeed, princes could be found deserving of such a monopoly! Every person the shooter meets with seems this day to have thrown off his sordid cloak, and to be divested of those meaner passions which render life miserable: all are now warm, open-hearted, frank, sincere, and obliging. The sportsman's shooting dress is a sibboleth, which introduces him alike to his superiors, to his fellows, and his inferiors: an acquaintance is formed at first sight: there are no distant looks, no coldness, no outpouring of arrogance, or avarice, or pride; but a happy rivalry exists, to eclipse each other in the number and size of birds killed—the chief object of emulation being to kill the finest old cock. Let us

be understood to express that this happy state of things, subsists only so long as the shooter's peregrinations are circumscribed by the limits of his own or friend's manor. The moment he becomes a borderer, a very different reception awaits him! To the sportsman in training, full of health and strength, and well appointed, it is of little consequence whether there be game or not. The inspiriting character of the sport, and the wild beauty of the scenery, so different from what he is elsewhere in the habit of contemplating, hold out a charm that dispels fatigue! He feels not the drudgery. To him the hills are lovely in every aspect; whether beneath a hot, autumnal sun, with not a cloud to intercept the torrid beam, or beneath the dark canopy of thunder-clouds; whether in the frosty morn or in the dewy eve—whether, when through the clear atmosphere he surveys as it were in a map, the countries that lie stretched around and beneath him, or when he wanders darkly on, amidst eternal mists that roll continuously past him—still a charm pervades the hills. The sun shines brighter, and the storm rages more furiously than in the valleys! The very sterility pleases: and to him who has been brought thither by the rapid means of travelling now adopted, from some bustling mart of trade, or vortex of fashion, the novelty of loneliness is agreeably exciting! The stillness that reigns around is as wonderful to him as the solidity of land to the stranded sailor! Scarcely is there a change of scene—stillness and solitude, hill and ravine, sky and heather, everywhere magnificent, the outline everywhere bold, and where the view terminates amid rocks and crags, frequently sublime! At noonday, near

some rocky summit, perchance on the shepherd's stone, the shooter seats himself, and shares his last sandwich with his panting dogs. We will suppose him to be on the boundary of the muir-lands: on one hand he sees an unbounded expanse of heathery hills, by no means monotonous if he will look upon them with the eye of a painter, for there is every shade of yellow, green, brown, and purple,—the last is the prevailing colour at this season, the heather being in bloom: nor are the hills monotonous, if he looks at them with the eye of a sportsman, for by this time (we suppose him to have been shooting all the morning) he will have performed many feats, or at any rate will have met with several adventures, and the ground before him is the field of his fame. He now looks with interest on many a rock, and cliff, and hill, which lately appeared but as one of so many 'crags, knolls, and mounds confusedly hurled!' He contemplates the site of his achievements, as a general surveys a field of battle during an interval of strife; the experience of the morning has taught him a lesson, and he plans a fresh campaign for the afternoon, or the morrow or probably the next season, should the same hills be again destined to be the scene of his exploits. The shooter looks down on the other hand from his rocky summit, and, in the bright relief, through the white rents in the clouds, sees the far-off meadows and hamlets, the woods, the rivers, and the lake. He rises, and renews his task. The invigorating influence of the bracing wind on the heights, lends the sportsman additional strength—he puts forth every effort, every nerve is strained—he feels an artificial glow after nature is exhausted, and returns to the cot

where he had previously spent a sleepless night, to enjoy his glass of grog, and such a *snooze* as the citizen never knew !"

This is a graphic and true picture of the outset of grouse-shooting; but it is but one amongst many of the exciting situations and picturesque positions which this fine sport presents. There is a wide difference too, between the grouse-shooting of the north of England and of the Highlands. On the English moors, the majority of shooters who assemble there, are the friends or acquaintances of the proprietors, or of their friends and acquaintances, who have received invitations, or procured the favour to shoot for a day or two at the opening of the season. The outbreak on the morning of the 12th, is therefore proportionably multitudinous and bustling. The throng of the people on the preceding evening, crowded into the inns and cottages in the neighbourhood where the best shooting lies, is often amazing. Many sportsmen, who on other occasions would think scorn to enter such a hovel, or jostle in such a crowd, may be seen waiting in patient endurance, in a situation in which a beggar would not envy him. Others will be seen stretched on their cloaks on the floor, while their dogs are occupying their beds, or the soft bottom of a huge old chair; their great anxiety being, to have their dogs fresh and able for the coming day. At the faintest peep of dawn, which is about three o'clock at that season, loud is the sound of guns on all sides, going off farther and farther in the distance. At noon, on some picturesque and breezy hill, you may see a large party congregated to lunch, where provisions and drink have been conveyed by appoint-

ment. There ten or a dozen sportsmen seated on the ground, all warm in body and mind—their dogs watching eagerly for their share of the feast, which is thrown them with liberal hand—their guns reared against some rock—their game thrown picturesquely on the moorland turf—Flibbertigibbets, with their asses who have brought up the baskets of provisions, the keg of beer, and bottles of porter, are running about and acting the waiters in a style of genuine originality; while keepers and markers are at once lunching and keeping an eye on the dogs, lest they are too troublesome to their masters; who are all talking together with inconceivable ardour of their individual achievements. The situation, the mixture of men and animals, of personages and costumes, all go to make up a striking picture. On the English moorlands, however, grouse-shooting is but as it were a brilliant and passing flash. As the enjoyment of the sport is generally a matter of grace and friendship, and is sought by numbers who can only devote to the excursion, at the best, a few days, it is a scene of animation and havoc for a week or ten days, and then its glory is over. During this time, however, the keepers on many estates make a rich harvest, by presents from gentlemen for attendance and guidance to the best haunts of the game—by the loan of dogs at good interest to such as have not come well provided, or have met with accidents, or whose dogs, as is sometimes the case, unused to this kind of sport and scenery, have bolted and disappeared at the first general discharge of guns; and by furnishing, *sub rosâ*, grouse at a guinea a brace to certain luckless braggadochioes, who have boastingly promised to

various friends at home plenty of game from the moors; and have not been able to ruffle a single feather! In the Highlands the scene is different. The grounds are more generally rented by individuals or parties; they are wider and wilder, and both from their extent and distance from the populous districts of England are more thinly scattered with shooters. There, some of the sportsmen take their families to their cottages on their shooting-ground, and on which they have probably bestowed some trouble and expense to render them sufficiently comfortable and convenient for a few months' occasional summer sojourn, and what in nature can afford a more delicious change from the ordinary course and place of life? Up far amongst the wild mountains and moorlands, amid every fresh and magnificent object—amid fairy-land glens of birch and hills of pine, the sight of crystal, rapid, sunny streams, and the sound of waterfalls, in the lands of strange and startling traditions. To intelligent children full of the enjoyment of life and healthful curiosity, in such scenery everything is wonderful and delightful; to ladies of taste, such a life for a brief season must be equally pleasant. There are some ladies, indeed, of the highest rank, who are in the regular habit of spending a certain portion of every year in the Highlands; and one in particular, of ducal rank, who at that season rambles far and wide amongst the cottages and the beautiful scenery of her native hills, telling her daughters, that if they there indulge in English luxuries, they must prepare them themselves,—such is the simplicity of her mountain residence and establishment; and they take their Cook's Oracle, and wonderfully enjoy the change. The

language and costume of the inhabitants are those of a foreign country; every object has its novelty, and the little elegancies of books, music, and furniture which can be conveyed to such an abode, strike all the more from the stern nature without. Then there is the finest fishing in the lochs and mountain-streams, the most delightful sailing in many places, and in the woods there are the shy roebuck and sometimes the red-deer to be pursued. The grouse and black-cock shooting season is, therefore, longer and steadier there; but the full perfection of its enjoyment is to be found, perhaps, after all, only by the happy mortal who makes one of the select party collected at one of the great Highland houses of the aristocracy, where the best shooting, every requisite of horses, dogs, attendants, etc., is furnished—and where, after the fatigues of the day the sportsman returns to his own clean room, to an excellent dinner, music, and refined society. But, amid all these seductions, nothing will make the thorough English sportsman forget the 1st of September. Back he comes, and enters on that regular succession of partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, and wild-fowl shooting, of hunting and coursing, which diversify and fill up the autumn and winter of English rural life. To these pleasures then we leave him.

A WORD WITH THE TOO SENSITIVE.

I have not attempted to defend the hunter, the courser, or even the shooter, in the preceding chapter, from the charge of cruelty which is perpetually directed

against them—they are a sturdy, and now a very intelligent people; often numbering amongst them many of our principal senators, authors, and men of taste, and very capable of vindicating themselves; but I must enact the shield-bearer for a moment, for that very worthy and much-abused old man Izaak Walton, and the craft which he has made so fashionable. Spite even of Lord Byron's jingle about the hook and gullet, and a stout fish to pull it, they may say what they will of the old man's cruelty and inconsistency—the death of a worm, a frog, or a fish, is the height of his infliction, and what is that to the ten thousand deaths of cattle, sheep, lambs, fish, and fowl of all kinds, that are daily perpetrated for the sustenance of these same squeamish cavillers! They remind me of a delicate lady, at whose house I was one day, and on passing the kitchen door at ten in the morning, saw a turkey suspended by its heels, and bleeding from its bill, drop by drop. Supposing it was just in its last struggles from a recent death-wound, I passed on, and found the lady lying on her sofa overwhelmed in tears over a most touching story. I was charmed with her sensibility; and the very delightful conversation which I held with her, only heightened my opinion of the goodness of her heart. On accidentally passing by the same kitchen door in the afternoon, six hours afterwards, I beheld, to my astonishment, the same turkey suspended from the same nail, still bleeding, drop by drop, and still giving an occasional flutter with its wings! Hastening to the kitchen, I inquired of the cook, if she knew that the turkey was not dead. "O yes, sir," she replied, "it won't be dead, may-happen, these two

hours. We always kill turkeys that way, it so improves their colour; they have a vein opened under the tongue, and only bleed a drop at a time!" "And does your mistress know of this your mode of killing turkeys?" "O yes, bless you sir, it's our regular way; missis often sees 'em as she goes to the gardens—and she says sometimes, 'Poor things! I don't like to see 'em, Betty; I wish you would hang them where I should not see 'em!" I was sick! I was dizzy! It was the hour of dinner, but I walked quietly away,

> And ne'er repassed that *bloody* threshold more!

I say, what is Izaak Walton's cruelty to this, and to many another such perpetration on the part of the tender and sentimental? What is it to the grinding and oppression of the poor, that is every day going on in society,—to the driving of wheels and the urging of steam engines, matched against whose iron power thousands daily waste their vital energies? What is it to the laying on of burdens of expense and trouble by the exactions of law, of divinity, of custom,—burdens grievous to be borne, and which they who impose them, will not so much as touch with one of their little fingers?

> They sit at home and turn an easy wheel,
> And set sharp racks to work to pinch and peel.
> *John Keats.*

These things are done and suffered by human beings, and then go the very doers of these things, and cry out mightily against the angler for pricking the gristle of a fish's mouth!

I do not mean to advocate cruelty—far from it! I would have all men as gentle and humane as possible; nor do I argue that because the world is full of cruelty, it is any reason that more cruelty should be tolerated: but I mean to say, that it *is* a reason why there should not be so much permission to the greater evils, and so much clamour against the less. Is there more suffering caused by angling than by taking fishes by the net? Not a thousandth,—not a ten thousandth part! Where one fish is taken with a hook, it may be safely said that a thousand are taken with the net: for daily are the seas, lakes, and rivers swept with nets; and cod, haddock, halibut, salmon, crabs, lobsters, and every species of fish that supplies our markets, are gathered in thousands and ten thousands—to say nothing of herrings and pilchards by millions. Over these there is no lamentation; and yet their sufferings are as great—for the suffering does not consist so much in the momentary puncture of a hook, as in the dying for lack of their native element. Then go these tender-hearted creatures and feast upon turtles that have come long voyages nailed to the decks of ships in living agonies; upon crabs, lobsters, prawns, and shrimps, that have been scalded to death; and thrust oysters alive into fires; and fry living eels in pans, and curse poor anglers before their gods for cruel monsters, and bless their own souls for pity and goodness, forgetting all the fish-torments they have inflicted!

"Ay, but"—they turn round upon you suddenly with what they deem a decisive and unanswerable argument—"Ay, but they cannot approve of making the miseries of sentient creatures a pleasure." What!

is there no pleasure in feasting upon crabs that have been scalded, and eels that have been fried alive? In sucking the juices of an oyster, that has gaped in fiery agony between the bars of your kitchen grate? But the whole argument is a sophism and a fallacy. Nobody *does* seek a pleasure, or make an amusement of the misery of a living creature. The pleasure is in the pursuit of an object, and the art and activity by which a wild creature is captured, and in all those concomitants of pleasant scenery and pleasant seasons that enter into the enjoyment of rural sports;—the *suffering* is only the *casual adjunct*, which you would spare to your victim if you could, and which any humane man will make as small as possible. And over what, after all, do these very sensitive persons lament? Over the momentary pang of a creature, which forms but one atom in a living series, every individual of which is both pursuing and pursued, is preying, or is preyed upon. The fish is eagerly pursuing the fly, one fish is pursuing the other, and so it is through the whole chain of living things, and this is the order and system established by the very centre and principle of love, by the beneficent Creator of all life. The too sensitively humane, will again exclaim—"Yes, this is right in the inferior animals: it is their nature, and they only follow the impulse which their Maker has given them." True; but what is right in them, is equally right in man;—the argument applies with double force in his case. For, is there no such impulse implanted in him? Let every sportsman answer it; let the history of the world answer it; let the heart of every nine-tenths of the human race answer it. Yes, the very fact that we do pursue such

sports, and enjoy them, is an irrefragable answer. The principle of chase and taking of prey, which is impressed on almost all living things, from the minutest insect to the lion of the African desert, is impressed with double force on man. By the strong dictates of our nature, by the very words of the Holy Scriptures, every creature is given us for food; our dominion over them, is made absolute. The amiable Cowper asserted that dogs would not pursue game, if they were not taught to do so. We admit the excellent nature of the man, but every day proves that, in this instance, he was talking beyond his knowledge. Every one who knows anything of dogs, knows, that if you bring them up in a town, and keep them away from the habits of their own class to their full growth, the moment they get into the country, they will pursue each their peculiar game, with the utmost avidity, and after their own manner. There is then, unquestionably, an instinctive propensity in one animal to prey upon another—in man pre-eminently so—and it is not the work of wisdom to quench this tendency, but to follow it with all possible gentleness and humanity.

CHAPTER V.

SCIENTIFIC FARMING.

Res rustica, sine dubitatione, proxima, et quasi consanguinea Sapientiæ est.—*Columella, De Re Rustica.*

> Oh, blessed, who drinks the bliss that Hymen yields,
> And plucks life's roses in his quiet fields.—*Ebenezer Elliott.*

THERE may be a difference of opinion as to the strict utility or wisdom of the pursuits noticed in the last chapter;—of the excellence and rationality of those which form the subject of this, there can be none. Nothing can be more consonant to nature, nothing more delightful, nothing more beneficial to the country, or more worthy of any man, than the georgical occupations which form so prominent a feature in the rural life of England. Whether a country gentleman seek profit or pleasure, in them he can, at any time, find them. While he is increasing the value of his estate, he is in the midst of health, peace, and a series of operations which have now become purely scientific, and have called in to their accomplishment various other sciences and arts. In every age of the world agricultural pursuits have formed the delight of the greatest nations and the noblest men. Some of the

most illustrious kings and prophets of Israel were taken from the fold or the plough. David and Elisha are great names in the history of rural affairs. King Uzziah "built towers in the desert, and digged many wells, for he had much cattle both in the low country and in the plains; husbandmen also, and vinedressers in the mountains, and in Carmel, for he loved husbandry." How delightful are the associations which the literature of Greece and Rome has thrown around country affairs! Homer, Hesiod, and Theocritus—how elysian are the glimpses they give us into rural life! how simple, how peaceful, how picturesque! Laertes, that venerable old monarch, pruning his vines, and fetching young stocks from the woods for his fences. Eumeus, at his rustic lodge, entertaining his prince and his king. Hesiod himself, wandering at the feet of Helicon, less impressed with the sublimity of the poet than with the spirit of the husbandman! He shews us the very infancy of agriculture:

> Forget not when you sow the grain, to mind
> That a boy follows with a rake behind;
> And strictly charge him, as you drive, with care
> The seeds to cover, and the birds to scare.
>
> *Works and Days*, B.2.

The harrow, an implement well known to King David, for he put the subjected Ammonites under it, was unknown then in Greece! They *raked* in the grain. That was but the second stage in the progress of tillage; the first undoubtedly being that in which their plough was a pointed stick, and their harrow a bush; as the most ancient drawing of hay-forks shews that they were forked sticks cut from the thicket. But to leave those primitive times of Greece,—there is no

nation that at once acquired so vast a military renown and yet retained such a passion for the peaceful pursuits of agriculture as Rome. Nothing is so soon familiarized to the mind of the school-boy as the fact of their generals, dictators, and emperors tilling their own lands—leaving them with reluctance for state honours, and retiring to them with gladness to end their days in meditative tranquillity. Cicero tells us that couriers were first introduced by them, to run between the capitol and their farms, that they themselves might leave them only on most important occasions. Almost every one of their writers on rural affairs whose works have reached us were men of distinction in the state. Varro was consul; Cato, the most remarkable man of his time, filled the highest offices; Columella and Palladius were men of note; and Pliny, a patrician officer, was governor of Spain. But what is more remarkable even is, that such men as Virgil, Horace, and Cicero, men of imaginative genius, and so involved in court life, or the business of government, should be such passionate lovers of rural concerns. Every one knows how their writings overflow with the praises of country life, and what delight they took in their farms and villas. Cicero seems as though he could never have done with telling us of the pleasure he took in farming. "I might expatiate," he says, "on the beauty of verdant groves and meadows, on the charming aspects of vineyards and olive-yards, but to say all in one word, there cannot be a more pleasing, or a more profitable scene that that of a well-cultivated farm. In my opinion, indeed, no kind of occupation is more fraught with happiness, not only as the business of husbandry is of singular utility to mankind,

but, as I have said, being attended with its own peculiar pleasures. I will add too, as a further recommendation, and let it restore me to the good graces of the voluptuous, that it supplies both the table and the altar with the greatest variety and abundance. Accordingly, the magazines of the skilful and industrious farmer are plentifully stored with wine and oil, with milk, cheese, and honey; as his yards abound with poultry, and his fields with flocks and herds of kids, lambs, and porkets. The garden also furnishes him with an additional source of delicacies, in allusion to which the farmers pleasantly call a certain piece of ground allotted to that particular use, their *dessert*. I must not omit, likewise, that in the intervals of their more important business, and in order to heighten the relish of the rest, the sports of the field claim a share of their amusements. * * * Of country occupations I profess myself a warm admirer. They are pleasures perfectly consistent with every degree of advanced years, as they approach the nearest of all others to those of the purely philosophical kind. They are derived from observing the nature and properties of their own earth, which yields a ready obedience to the cultivator's industry, and returns with interest what he deposits in her charge."—*De Senectute.*

He then goes on to tell us what delight he took in the cultivation of the vine; in watching the springing and progress of corn; the green blade pushing forth, shooting into a knotted stem, nourished and supported by the fibres of the root, terminated in the ear in which the grain is lodged in regular order, and defended from the depredations of birds by its bearded spikes. He tells us that he could name numbers of

his most distinguished friends and neighbours, and some of them at very advanced ages, who take such interest in all that is going on at their farms, that they will be present at every important agricultural operation—many of them engaged in improvements of which they will see neither the benefit nor the end. "And what," says he, "do these noble husbandmen, when they are asked for what purpose they dig and plant, reply—'In obedience to the immortal gods, by whose bountiful providence we received these fields from our ancestors, and whose will it is that we should deliver them down with improvement to posterity!'" And this generous and high sense of duty it was which animated the Romans during the better portion of their republic, and kept alive their virtue and their simplicity of life, so far as to give them power to despise wealth, and to command the fortunes of other men. Cicero is delighted with this noble principle, and he reverts with enthusiasm to the picture of Manlius Curius, who, after having conquered the Samnites, the Sabines, and even Pyrrhus himself, passed the honourable remainder of his age in cultivating his farm. He adds, "I can never behold his villa without reflecting with the highest degree of admiration both on the singular moderation of his mind, and the general simplicity of the age in which he flourished. Here it was, while sitting by his fireside, that he nobly rejected the gold which was offered him on the part of the Samnites, and rejected it with this memorable saying, 'that he placed his glory, not on the abundance of his own wealth, but in commanding those amongst whom it abounded.'" With equal exultation he refers to the enthusiasm into which

Xenophon in his treatise of Œconomics breaks forth in the praise of agriculture, and relates the interview of Lysander the Spartan ambassador with Cyrus the younger, as told by Socrates to his friend Critobulus, in which Cyrus assures Lysander that all the trees, shrubs, etc. which he admired in his garden were planted by his own hand.

But if such were the charms which agriculture had for the Roman nobility, how much greater ought it to possess for the nobles and gentlemen of England! Amid all the advantages and recreations which have been pointed out in the preceding chapters as surrounding the country life of modern England, that of scientific farming is certainly one of the greatest. It is a pursuit full of interest and variety, at once natural, philosophical, and dignified. It is difficult to imagine a man of wealth and education more usefully or honourably employed than in directing the culture and improvement of his estate. Agriculture is now become, indeed, as Cicero termed it in his day, "the nearest of all employments to the purely philosophical kind." It is a science which requires a first-rate education to prosecute it to its full capability, to make the other arts and sciences of modern times bear upon it, and co-operate with it, so as to add something to its progression, or even to apply beneficially the knowledge of its already established principles and practices. It is no longer an occupation which requires a man to forego the refined pleasures of society, to bury himself amid woods and wildernesses in some obscure hamlet far from the enjoyments and intelligence of the world. As we have already seen, locate himself where he will in these islands, the arts, the

elegancies, the news and knowledge of civilized life will penetrate to him by swift agencies, and give him all the real advantages of the city in the peace and fulness of his retirement. And what a noble art is agriculture now become! Look at the manner it is now practised by the most skilful of its professors. Let any one just turn over the leaves of Mr. Loudon's Encyclopædia of Agriculture, and trace the progress of its implements only, from the plough of the ancients in the shape of a mere pick, to the almost endless machines which the active brains of men and their advancing knowledge of mechanics have given to the scientific farmer. Let any one turn to the list of engravings of farming apparatus in the same excellent work, amounting to about 300, and he will obtain some idea of the amount of science and invention now devoted to the use of the agriculturist. There are no men who have availed themselves of the progress of the arts and of general knowledge more than they. Mechanics, chemistry, hydraulics, steam, all have been seized upon, to develope the principles, or facilitate the operations of agriculture. Within the last century the strides which have been made in this interesting department of knowledge are admirable. The Netherlands may be said to have been the mother of our modern agriculture —Scotland its nurse. Tull's system of horse-hoeing and drill husbandry has been introduced by Dawson, and has brought after it a numerous train of drills, dibbling-machines, horse-hoes, ploughs, rollers, scufflers, scarifiers, watering-machines, brakes, drill-harrows, etc., which we now see almost everywhere where the old system of plain ploughing, harrowing, and broadcast sowing prevailed to the infinite loss of seed and

growth of weeds. Then comes the thrashing machine invented by Menzies, and improved by Meikle from stage to stage, successively adapted to horses, wind, water, and eventually the giant power of steam, thus giving to the operations of the barn a rapidity equal to the skill and neatness displayed in the field. The scientific genius of Sir Humphry Davy, Thompson, Fourcroy, Parmentier, Kirwan, Gay Lussac, and many other eminent chemists, have been employed to investigate more accurately the real nature of soils and manures, and a vast increase of productive power has been the result. Bones, a source of fertility till of late entirely wasted, have done wonders; rape-dust, malt-dust, oil, fish, salt, wood and peat ashes, soot, gypsum, and many other substances, have been made the active agents of human subsistence. The best mixture of crops has been determined by numerous experiments; and the benefits of stall-feeding clearly demonstrated. Mangel-würzel, trifolium incarnatum, a plant that from its rich crimson hue would be an ornament of our fields even were it not a profitable production, and other vegetables, have been added to that plenteous growth of clover, dills, lucerne, rape, turnips, etc., with which modern tillage has enriched both summer and winter stalls. The improvement of the breed of cattle and sheep by Bakewell of Dishly, and the Culleys; the growth of finer and better wools by the introduction and crossing with the Merino by Lord Somerville and others, have been as remarkable as the superior cultivation of the soil. The science of draining has found devotees equally ardent, and has produced the most striking consequences. In many instances the mere act of draining has quadrupled the

produce of land. In the weald of Kent, land which produced only a rental of five shillings an acre, has been raised by this process to five-and-twenty. And all these objects have been watched over, canvassed, and stimulated by the establishment of agricultural societies, agricultural journals and newspapers, and ploughing matches. Agricultural associations are now to be found in almost every county, and in different districts of the same county, which offer premiums on the best specimens of horses, cattle, and sheep; the best ploughing, and the most steady and industrious farm and household servants. It is a new feature in rural life, to see the whole farming population of a district hastening on a given day, gentlemen, farmers, and farm servants all in their best array, to some one spot where the cattle are shewn, the ploughing is done, the prizes are awarded by umpires chosen from the most skilful, and the different parties then going to a good dinner, and a long talk and hearty toasting of all the interests of agriculture.

It is really too, as curious to see on our scientific farms the vast variety of implements and machines which these causes have produced;—ploughs—about a dozen and a half swing-ploughs, and upwards of a dozen wheel-ploughs of different constructions, and by different patentees; harrows, drills, cultivators. Every species of soil and crop has its peculiar apparatus; in the field and the farm-yard; for getting seed into the ground, clearing and dressing when there, for thrashing it out and cleaning it for market; for sowing peas, beans, turnips, carrots, parsnips, etc., for chopping, slicing, and preparing them for cattle; their machines for tedding hay, for stacking it with

least possible risk, for cutting and steaming it; for ploughing up weeds, ploughing up moorlands, and even roads; for reaping by wholesale, and raking by wholesale; for tapping deep springs, and guttering the surface for the escape of top-water; there are their machines for paring and levelling lumpy lands; for cross-cutting furrows to make rough mossy land take seed better; their channels, sluices, and schemes for irrigation. And then, who shall tell all their implements for hay-binding, rope-twisting, furze-pounding for cattle; their novel churns, their ratteries, their new-fangled mole-traps, their poultry-feeders, and pheasant-feeders, by which those birds are enabled to help themselves from tin boxes supplied with grain for them, without feathered depredators being able to go shares with them. Truly Solomon might say that men now-a-days have sought out many inventions!

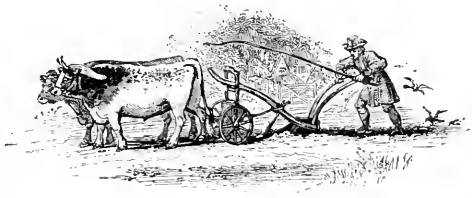
But who shall calculate all the thoughts and the labours of such men as Fitzherbert, Tusser, Gooch, Platt, Hartlib, Weston, Markham, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir John Norden, John Evelyn, Worlidge, Stillingfleet, Harte, Arthur Young, Maxwell, Lord Kaimes, Sir John Sinclair, etc. etc.? Who shall aggregate and estimate the numerous valuable suggestions and articles of anonymous writers in the journals; and the personal labours and fostering influence of such men as the late Duke of Buccleugh, the Dukes of Bedford and Portland, the late Lord Somerville, Mr. Coke of Holkham, now the Earl of Leicester, and many other noblemen and gentlemen who have spent their lives in the unostentatious but most meritorious endeavour to perfect the agricultural science of England? With the exception of natu-

ralists, there are no men whose pursuits seem to me to yield them so much real happiness as intelligent agriculturists whose hearts are in the business; and though there are men whose offices or professions place them more in the public eye, there are none who are more truly the benefactors of their country. Such were Lord Somerville and the Duke of Buccleugh, as described by Sir Walter Scott; and there is a passage in his memoir of the latter nobleman well worth the notice of those who propagate or believe in the nonsense of the economists on the non-influence of absenteeism. "In the year 1817, when the poor stood so much in need of employment, a friend asked the Duke why his grace did not prepare to go to London in the spring? By way of answer, the Duke showed him a list of day-labourers then employed in improvements on his different estates, the number of whom, exclusive of his regular establishments, amounted to *nine hundred and forty-seven persons.* If we allow to each labourer two persons, whose support depended on his wages, the Duke was in a manner foregoing, during this severe year, the privilege of his rank, in order to provide with more convenience for a little army of nearly three thousand persons, many of whom must otherwise have found it difficult to obtain subsistence. The result of such conduct is twice blessed; both in the means which it employs, and in the end which it attains in the general improvement of the country. This anecdote forms a good answer to those theorists who pretend that the residence of proprietors on their estates is a matter of indifference to the inhabitants of that district. Had the Duke been residing, and spending his revenue

elsewhere, one half of these poor people would have wanted employment and food; and would probably have been little comforted by any metaphysical arguments upon population, which could have been presented to their investigation."—*Scott's Prose Works*, vol. 4.

Many such things may be daily heard of the present Duke of Portland, in the neighbourhood of Welbeck Abbey, in Nottinghamshire; which convince you that he is one of those men that contrive to pass through life without much noise, but reaping happiness and respect in abundance, and while gratifying the taste for rural occupation, conferring the most lasting benefits upon the country. I shall close this section of this chapter with the *substance* of one such act as related to me some years ago. In the manner of relation it may therefore differ somewhat from that in which originally told, but in fact I believe it to be perfectly correct. The Duke found that one of his tenants, a small farmer, was falling, year after year, into arrears of rent. The steward wished to know what should be done. The duke rode to the farm; saw that it was rapidly deteriorating, and the man, who was really an experienced and industrious farmer, totally unable to manage it, from poverty. In fact, all that was on the farm was not enough to pay the arrears. "John," said the duke, as the farmer came to meet him as he rode up to the house, "I want to look over the farm a little." As they went along, —"Really" said he, "everything is in very bad case. This won't do. I see you are quite under it. All your stock and crops won't pay the rent in arrear. I will tell you what I must do. I must take the farm

into my own hands. You shall look after it for me, and I will pay you your wages." Of course there was no saying nay,—the poor man bowed assent. Presently there came a reinforcement of stock, then loads of manure,—at the proper time, seed, and wood from the plantations for repairing gates and buildings. The duke rode over frequently. The man exerted himself, and seemed really quite relieved from a load of care by the change. Things speedily assumed a new aspect. The crops and stock flourished; fences and outbuildings were put into good order. In two or three rent days, it was seen by the steward's books that the farm was paying its way. The duke on his next visit, said, "Well, John, I think the farm does very well now. We will change again. You shall be tenant again, and as you now have your head fairly above water, I hope you will be able to keep it there." The duke rode off at his usual rapid rate. The man stood in astonishment; but a happy fellow he was, when on applying to the steward he found that he was actually re-entered as tenant to the farm just as it stood in its restored condition;—I will venture to say, however, that the duke himself was the happier man of the two.



CHAPTER VI.

PLANTING.

"Jock, when ye hae naething else to do, ye may be aye sticking in a tree; it will be growing, Jock, when *ye 're sleeping.*"

Heart of Mid Lothian.

WHAT we have just said of the pleasures and benefit of scientific farming, may be said also of planting; it is but another interesting mode of employing time by landed proprietors, at once for recreation and the improvement of their estates. What, indeed, can be more delightful than planning future woods, where, perhaps, now sterile heather, or naked declivities present themselves; clothing, warming, diversifying in imagination your vicinity; then turning your visions into realities, and watching the growth of your forests? Since John Evelyn wrote his eloquent Sylva, and displayed the deplorable condition of our woodlands, and since Dr. Johnson penned his sarcastic Tour to the Hebrides, both England and Scotland have done much to repair the ravages made in the course of ages in our woods. A strong spirit on the subject has grown up in the minds of our landed gentry, and vast numbers of trees of all kinds suitable to our climate have been planted in different parts of the island. The Commissioners of Woods and Forests

have made extensive plantations of oak in the New Forest, and other places. In the neighbourhood of all gentlemen's houses we see evidences of liberal planting: and the rich effect of these young woods is well calculated to strengthen the love of planting. In this part of Surrey, wood, indeed seems the great growth of the country. Look over the landscape from Richmond Hill, from Claremont, from St. George's, or St. Anne's Hill, and it is one wide sea of wood. The same is the case in the bordering regions of Buckingham and Berk shires. Richmond Park, Hampton-Court Park, Bushy Park, Claremont and Esher Parks, Oatlands, Painshill, Windsor, Ockham, Bookham, the whole wide country is covered with parks, woods, and fields, the very hedgerows of which are dense, continuous lines of trees. Look into the part of Kent approaching the metropolis from the heights of Norwood, and the prospect is the same. Many of the extensive commons hereabout, as Bookham and Streatham commons, are scattered with fine oaks, some of them very ancient, and diversified with thickets and green glades, and rather resemble old forests and parks, than commons as seen elsewhere. Then again, the sandy heaths of Surrey are covered in many places with miles of Scotch firs. There certainly is no want of wood in these parts. In the sandy wastes of Old Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire, many thousand acres, principally of larch, have been planted on the estates of the Dukes of Portland and Newcastle, Lord Scarborough, Earl Manvers, Cols. Need, Wildman, and other proprietors. Even the cold hills of the Peak of Derbyshire have been planted in some parts extensively; and lands in those districts which were literally unproductive, are now a source of

considerable income from the thinning of the woods. In Scotland the same change is very visible. All along the borders the good lands are beautifully cultivated, the bad extensively planted. From the dreary flats about Gretna Green to the borders of Northumberland and Berwickshire, this is the case. Passing into Scotland by the Cheviots, we saw extensive woods on the border lands of the Duke of Northumberland, Earl Tankerville, Mr. Collingwood, Mr. St. Paul, etc. The cold and wild tract between Kelso and Edinburgh presents cheering appearances of the extension of the planting spirit. In the counties of Argyle, Ross, and Inverness, which Monteith of Stirling, in his Forester's Guide, particularly points out as wanting wood, we were struck with the great extent of planting already done. Every summer tourist up the Clyde sees how much the woods round Roseneath have sheltered and beautified it—and the woods around Inverary Castle are, to a great extent, very splendid—while all the way thence to Oban you pass through mountain glens and over moorlands enriched with woods. The Duke of Athol, about Athol and Dunkeld has planted upwards of 15,000 acres. The Duke of Montrose has been a great planter. Sir Walter Scott was a diligent planter, as the young woods round Abbotsford testify; and there are no moments of his life in which we can imagine him happier than when mounted on his pony he progressed through his plantations at his leisure, with his pruning knife in his hand. But what he did on his own estate is trivial to what he did by his writings. He may be said to have planted more trees by his pen than any man alive has with his spade. He himself tells us that the

simple words put into the mouth of the Laird of Dumbiedikes, and placed as a motto at the head of this chapter, induced a certain earl to plant a large tract of country.

In the neighbourhood of Dingwall, Beuley, Beaufort, — from Inverness to Culloden, — in short, in almost every part of the Highlands,—you find extensive young woods of larch and pine. Many of these, it must be confessed, have apparently been made with more regard to profit than beauty. In many of the sweet straths, and along the feet of the mountains, the long monotonous reaches of larch—an unbroken, unvaried succession of pointed pyramids—present but an indifferent contrast to the free slopes of beauty which the native growth of the birches exhibits; dotting glens and embosoming lochs with a fairyland loveliness. As they become large, and are thinned properly, or rather, where they are planted thinly, on the plan of the Duke of Athol, this defect may be remedied. Scotch firs, when large, assume a wild forest majesty; and larches in mountainous situations, of an ancient growth, have an Alpine sweep of boughs that is extremely picturesque and graceful; but young crowded firs of any kind are too formal for beauty.

Mr. Wordsworth, in his Guide to the Lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland, complains grievously of the injury done to the scenery there, by the injudicious planting of larch. "Larch and fir plantations have been spread, not merely with a view to profit, but in many instances for the sake of ornament. To those who plant for profit, and are thrusting every other tree out of the way, to make room for their

favourite, the larch, I would utter first a regret, that they should have selected these lovely vales for their vegetable manufactory, when there is so much barren and irreclaimable land in the neighbouring moors, and in other parts of the island, which might have been had for this purpose at a far cheaper rate.—It must be acknowledged that the larch, till it has outgrown the size of a shrub, shews, when looked at singly, some elegance of form and appearance, especially in spring, decorated, as it then is, by the pink tassels of its blossoms; but, as a tree, it is less than any other pleasing. Its branches—for boughs it has none—have no variety in the youth of the tree, and little dignity even when it attains its full growth; *leaves* it cannot be said to have, consequently affords neither shade nor shelter. In spring, the larch becomes green long before the native trees, and its green is so peculiar and vivid, that, finding nothing to harmonize with it, wherever it comes forth a disagreeable speck is produced. In summer, when all other trees are in their pride, it is of a dingy, lifeless hue; in autumn, of a spiritless unvaried yellow; and in winter, it is still more lamentably distinguished from any other deciduous tree of the forest, for they seem only to sleep, but the larch seems absolutely dead. If an attempt be made to mingle thickets, or a certain proportion of other forest trees, with the larch, its horizontal branches intolerantly cut them down, as with a scythe, or force them to spindle up to keep pace with it. The terminating spike renders it impossible that the several trees, where planted in numbers, should ever blend together so as to form a mass, or masses of wood. Add thousands to tens of

thousands, and the appearance is still the same—a collection of separate individual trees, obstinately presenting themselves as such; and which, from whatever point they are looked at, if but seen, may be counted upon the fingers. Sunshine, or shadow, has little power to adorn the surface of such a wood; and the trees not carrying up their heads, the wind raises amongst them no majestic undulations."

There is much truth in these remarks, and they cannot be too much borne in mind by all planters where picturesque beauty is an object. On dreary moors, where the larch is planted merely for profit, and where the *tout-ensemble* cannot readily be attained, woods of it often present a great degree of pleasantness by contrast. They give you green glades and narrow footpaths, between heath and fern, their slender boughs hanging above you, especially in the freshness of their foliage, very agreeably. As a matter of profit, and for the value of its timber, few species of wood can compete with it. The following extract from the Transactions of the Highland Society, gives a very striking view of its importance. "Larch will supply ship-timber at a great height above the region of the oak; and while a seventy-four gun ship will require the oak timber of seventy-five acres, it will not require more than the timber of ten acres of larch; the trees in both cases being sixty-eight years old. The larch, at Dunkeld, grows at the height of 1300 feet above the level of the sea; the spruce at 1200; the Scotch pine at 700; and deciduous trees at not higher than 500. The larch, in comparison with the Scotch pine, is found to produce three and three-quarter times more timber, and that

timber of seven times more value. The larch also, being a deciduous tree, instead of injuring the pasture under it, improves it. The late Duke of Athol, John the Second, planted in the last year of his life, 6500 Scotch acres of mountain ground solely with the larch, which in the course of seventy-two years from the time of planting, will be a forest of timber fit for the building of the largest class of ships in his majesty's navy. It will have been thinned out to about 400 trees per acre. Each tree will contain at the least fifty cubic feet, or one load of timber, which at the low price of one shilling the cubic foot, only one half of its present value, will give 1000*l.* per acre, or in all, a sum of 6,500,000*l.* sterling. Besides this, there will have been a return of 7*l.* per acre from the thinnings, after deducting all expense of thinning, and the original outlay of planting. Further still, the land on which the larch is planted, is not worth above ninepence or one shilling per acre. After the thinnings of the first thirty years, the larch will make it worth at least ten shillings per acre by the improvement of the pasturage, on which cattle can be kept summer and winter."

That is pretty well. This calculation is made upon land stated at 1*s.* per acre, planted with larch; but Monteith, an experienced timber planter and valuer, gives us for oak planted on land of 1*l.* per acre yearly rent, the following statement.

"If the proprietor, for instance, plants 100 acres of ground, the trees being placed four feet distant from each other, each acre will contain 3422 plants. If it be planted with hard woods, chiefly oaks, and a few firs to nurse them up, supposing it is a plantation

purely for profit, the expense of plants and planting, per acre, will be 6*l.* . . . . . £ 600 0 0

Rent of land for ten years, at 1*l.* per acre, per annum .				1000	0	0
Interest on rent				225	0	0
Expenses of thinning, pruning, and training up for 10 years, at 1*l.* per acre, per annum				1000	0	0
Total expenditure			£	2825	0	0
Deduct produce of 1000 trees thinned from each acre, during the first 10 years, at 2*l.* per acre . . . . £	200	0	0			
Deduct value of 2422 trees left on the ground after the first 10 years, at 7*l.* 10*s.* per acre	750	0	0	950	0	0
Total outlay at the end of 10 years			£	1875	0	0
To which add expense of thinning and pruning for the next 10 years at 2*l.* per acre . . . . . £	200	0	0			
Rent of the land for the same period at 1*l.* per acre, per annum . . .	1000	0	0			
Interest on the rent for the same period	275	0	0			
Interest on 1875*l.* for 10 years . .	937	0	0	2412	0	0
Total outlay for 20 years			£	4287	0	0
Deduct produce of 1000 trees thinned out during the last 10 years, from each acre, at 6*d.* each, or 25*l.* per acre £	2500	0	0			
Deduct for 1422 trees which fall to be enhanced in value during the last 10 years, and will come to at least 35*l.* 11*s.* per acre	3555	0	0	6055	0	0
			£	1768	0	0
Deduct from this the value of these 1000 trees as they were estimated at the end of the first 10 years, at 3*l.* 2*s.* per acre . . .				310	0	0
Thus leaving a balance in favour, of			£	1458	0	0

Hitherto the amount of gain is comparatively small, but this calculation continued according to the growth of the trees for ten years more, will leave the balance no less than 23,667*l.* And to the end of forty years from first planting, the round sum of 41,000*l.* "These calculations," says Monteith, "may to those who have paid no attention to the subject, excite wonder if not doubt, but in making them, the author has been careful to lessen rather than exaggerate the profits: and if the plantation shall have been carried to the age of sixty or seventy years, and properly thinned, etc., the value will be double what it was at forty years." Thus, if 100 acres in seventy years will yield 80,000*l.* planted with oak, 6000 acres will yield about 5,000,000*l.*; while 6000 acres of the larch plantations of Athol in the same period are calculated to yield about 6,000,000*l.* There is sufficient agreement to lead us to suppose the calculations probably accurate, and what a splendid inducement to judicious planting do these calculations present!

The following facts, given in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," (vol. i. art. agriculture), are also particularly interesting to the planter. Mr. Pavier, in the fourth volume of the Bath Papers, computes the value of fifty acres of oak timber in 100 years, to be 12,100*l.*, which is nearly 2*l.* 10*s.* annually per acre; and if we consider that this is continually accumulating, without any of that expense or risk, to which annual crops are subject, it is probable that timber-planting may be accounted one of the most profitable articles in husbandry. Evelyn calculates the profit of 1000 acres of oak land in 150 years at no less than 670,000*l.*

The following table shews the increase of trees from their first planting. It was taken from the Marquis of Lansdowne's plantation, begun in the year 1765, and the calculation made in 1786. It is about six acres in extent, the soil partly a swampy meadow upon a gravelly bottom. The measures were taken at five feet above the surface of the ground; the small trees having been occasionally drawn for posts and rails, as well as rafters for cottages, and when peeled of the bark will stand well for seven years.

	Feet in height.	Circumference in Feet.	Inches.
Lombardy Poplar	60 to 80	4	8
Abeel	50 — 70	4	6
Plane	50 — 60	3	6
Acacia	50 — 60	2	4
Elm	40 — 60	3	6
Chestnut	30 — 50	2	9
Weymouth Pine	30 — 50	2	5
Chester Ditto	30 — 50	2	5
Scotch Fir	30 — 50	2	10
Spruce	30 — 50	2	2
Larch	50 — 60	3	10

From this table it appears that the planting of timber trees, when the return can be waited for twenty years, will undoubtedly repay the original cost of planting as well as the interest of the money laid out, which is better worth the attention of the proprietor of land, as the ground on which they grow may be supposed good for cattle also.

In Argyleshire, there are probably 40,000 acres of natural coppice wood which are cut periodically; commonly every nineteen or twenty years, and are understood to return about 1*l.* an acre annually.

Very extensive plantations have been formed by the Duke of Argyle, and other proprietors. About thirty years ago those of his grace were reckoned to contain 2,000,000 trees, worth then 4*s.* each, amounting to the enormous sum of 400,000*l.*

I knew a certain old military officer, who, during his early years was a captain in a militia regiment. His brother officers were a gay set of fellows, and were continually drawing on their private incomes, and often coming to him to borrow money; but he made it a rule never to spend more than his own pay, and as to money he never had any to lend. He went down to his estate every spring and autumn, and planted as many acres of trees as his rental would allow him. His planting gave him a perpetual plea of poverty. At a certain age he retired on his half-pay. A large family was growing around him, but his woods were growing too. Many a time have I seen him, mounted on an old brood mare, with a sort of capacious game-bag across her loins, with his gun slung at his shoulder, his saws and pruning-knives strapped behind his saddle, going away into his woods: and keeping the calculations of Monteith, and of the larch plantations of Athol in mind, I can now imagine the profound satisfaction which the old gentleman, through a long course of years, must have felt in the depths of his forest solitudes. He is still living, at an advanced age. His family is large, and has been expensive; but his woods were large too, and no doubt their *thinnings* have proved very grateful *thinnings* of his family charges.

CHAPTER VII.

GARDENS.

We must now wind up, in a few words, what we have to say of the country life of the gentry, and these words must be on their gardens. In these, as in all those other sources of enjoyment that surround them, perfection seems to be reached. They live in the midst of scenes which, while they appear nature itself, are the result of art consummated only by ages of labour, research, science, travel, and the most remarkable discoveries. Nothing can be more delicious than the rural paradises which now surround our country houses. Walks, waters, lawns of velvet softness, trees casting broad shadows, or whispering in the

stirrings of the breeze; seclusion and yet airiness; flowers from all regions, besides all the luxuries which the kitchen-garden, the orchard, conservatories, hot-houses, and sunny walls pour upon our tables, are so blended and diffused around our dwellings, that nothing on earth can be more delectable. It is impossible, without looking back through many ages of English life, to form any idea of the real advantages which we enjoy of this kind,—of the immense stride we have made from the bare and rigid life of our ancestors. How many of the fruits or flowers, or culinary vegetables, which we possess in such excellence and perfection, did this country originally produce? Few, indeed, of our indigenous flowers are retained in our gardens, few of our vegetables besides the cabbage and the carrot; and what were the ancient British fruits besides the crab and the bullace? But we have only to look back to the feudal times to see the wide difference between our gardens and those then existing; for all that could be enjoyed of a garden must be compressed within the narrow boundary of the castle moat. Everything without was subject to continual ravage and destruction; and though orchards were planted without, and suffered to take their chance, the ladies' little parterre occupied some sheltered nook of the court, or space between grim towers:

> Now was there maide fast by the touris wall,
> A garden faire, and in the corneris set
> An herbere grew; with wandis long and small,
> Railit about, and so with treeis set
> Was all the place, and hawthorn hedges knet,
> That lyfe was now, walkyng there for bye,
> That myght within scarce any wight espye.
>
> *The Quair, by James I. of Scotland.*

And the plot of culinary herbs occupied some sheltered spot within the moat; which, when it is recollected how many other requisites of existence and defence were also compressed into the same space—soldiers, arms, and machines of war; sleeping and eating rooms; room for the stabling and fodder of horses, and often of cattle; space for daily exercise, martial or recreative; bowls, tilting or tennis,—when cooped up by their enemies, or made cautious by critical times, small indeed must have been the space or the leisure for gardens. Even in 1540, Leland in his Itinerary, tells us that our nobility still dwelt in castles, and there retained the usual defences of moats, and drawbridges. This was especially the case, the nearer they approached to the Scotch or Welsh borders; though in the vicinity of London villas and palaces had long sprung up. At Wrexhill Castle, near Howden, in Yorkshire, he says, "The gardens within the mote, and the orchardes without were exceeding fair. And yn the orchardes were mounts, *opere topiario*, writhen about with degrees like the turnings in cokil shelles, to come to the top without payn." The career, indeed, by which our gardens have reached their present condition, has been, as I have said, the career of many ages, revolutions, and stupendous events. It is not only curious, but most interesting to trace all those circumstances which have contributed to raise horticulture to its present eminence,—the great national events, the extension of discovery, of the arts, of general knowledge; the deep ponderings in cells and fields; the achievements of genius, of enterprise; the combinations of science, and the variations of taste which have brought it to

what it is. The history of our gardening is, in fact, the history of Europe. The monks, whose religious character gave them an extraordinary security, as they were the first restorers of agriculture, so they were the first extenders and improvers of our gardens. Their long pilgrimages from one holy shrine to another, through France, Germany, and Italy, made them early acquainted with a variety of culinary and medicinal herbs, and with various fruits; and amongst the ruins of abbeys we still find a tribe of places that they thus naturalized. The crusades gave the next extension to horticultural knowledge; the growing commerce and wealth of Europe fostered it still farther; and the successive magnificent discoveries of the Indies, America, the isles of the Pacific and Australia, with all their new and splendid and invaluable productions, raised the desire for such things to the highest pitch; and made our gardens and green-houses affluent beyond all imagination. What hosts of new and curious plants do they still send us every season! From every corner of the earth are they daily reaching us: the average value of the plants in Loddige's gardens is calculated at 200,000*l*. But what a blank would they now be but for the mighty spirit of commerce, the thirst of discovery, and of traversing distant regions, which animate such numbers of our countrymen, and send them out to extend our geography, geology, and natural history, or to prosecute astronomical and philosophical science under every portion of the heavens? And besides these causes, how much is yet to be accounted for by the tastes of peculiar ages—out of the peculiar studies of the times, and the singular genius of particular

men thence arising. The influence of poets and imaginative writers upon the character of our gardens has been extreme. Whether an age were poetical or mathematical, made a mighty difference in the garden-style of the time. C. Matius, the favourite of Augustus Cæsar, introduced the fashion at Rome of clipping trees into shapes of animals and other grotesque forms; Pliny admired the invention, and celebrated it under the name of topiary-work; and so strongly did it take hold on the spirits of men, that it descended to all the nations of Europe, and was not exploded by us till the last century. Sir Henry Wotton, the tasteful and poetical courtier of Queen Elizabeth, and ambassador of James to Venice, with notions of the fitness of a garden far beyond his age, yet thought it "*a graceful and natural conceit*" in Michael Angelo to make a fountain-figure in the shape of "a sturdy washerwoman, washing and winding of linen clothes, in which act, she wrings out the water which made the fountain." And again Addison, followed by Pope and Walpole, overturned this ancient fondness for pleached walks, and tonsured trees, and quaint fountain-figures, whether of Neptunes, Niles, or washerwomen. Then the great change of the social system, from the feudal and military to civil and domestic, produced a correspondent change in the culture of gardens. While the country was rent to pieces by contentions for the crown, there could be little leisure or taste for gardens; but when men became peaceful, and collected their habitations into clusters, they naturally began to embellish both them and their environs.

From the reign of Edward III. to that of Henry

VIII. we look over a large space, and find but slight improvement in horticulture, and scanty traces of its literature. A bushel of onions in Richard II.'s reign cost twelve shillings of our present money: Henry VII. records himself in a MS. preserved in the Remembrance Office, that apples were in his day one and two shillings each, a red one fetching the highest price; and Henry VIII.'s queen, Catherine, when she wanted a salad, sent to Flanders for it. The very first book which was written on the culture of the soil in this country, appears to be Walter de Henly's—"De Yconomia sive Housbandria." Then came Nicholas Bollar's books, "De Arborum plantatione, and De generatione Arborum et modo generandi et plantandi," and some other MS. writings. Richard II. rewarded botanical skill in the person of John Bray with a pension. Henry Calcoensis in the fifteenth century composed a Synopsis Herbaria, and translated Palladius De Re Rustica into Gaelic. In the sixteenth century William Horman, Vice-Provost of Eton, wrote Herbarum Synonyma and indexes to Cato, Varro, Columella, and Palladius; and in the same century Wynkin de Worde printed "Mayster Groshede's Boke of Husbandry," which contained instructions for planting and grafting of trees and vines. Arnold's Chronicle in 1521, had a chapter on the same subject, and how to raise a salad in an hour; and Pynson published the "Boke of Surveying and Improvements." Then came Dr. Bulleyn, Dodoneus, Sir Anthony Fitzherbert and Tusser; and that is the history of gardens and their literature till the time of Henry VIII.; but thence to the eighteenth century,—to the days of Bridgman and Kent, what

multitudes of grand, quaint, and artificial gardens were spread over the country. Nonsuch, Theobalds, Greenwich, Hampton-Court, Hatfield, Moor-Park, Chatsworth, Beaconsfield, Cashiobury, Ham, and many another, stood in all that stately formality which Henry and Elizabeth admired, and in which our Surreys, Leicesters, Essexes; the splendid nobles of the Tudor dynasty, the gay ladies and gallants of Charles II.'s court, had walked and talked, fluttered in glittering processions, or flirted in green alleys and bowers of topiary-work; and amid figures, in lead or stone, fountains, cascades, copper trees dropping sudden showers on the astonished passers under, stately terraces with gilded balustrades, and curious quincunx, obelisks, and pyramids—fitting objects of the admiration of those who walked in high-heeled shoes, ruffs and fardingales, with fan in hand, or in trunk-hose and laced doublets.

"The palace of Nonsuch," said Hentzner in 1598, "is encompassed with parks full of deer, delicious gardens, groves ornamented with trellis-work, cabinets of verdure (summer-houses, or seats cut in yew), and walls so embowered by trees, that it seems to be a place pitched upon by pleasure herself to dwell in along with health. In the pleasure and artificial gardens are many columns and pyramids of marble; two fountains that spout water, one round, the other like a pyramid, upon which are perched small birds that stream water out of their bills. In the grove of Diana is a very agreeable fountain, with Actæon turned into a stag, as he was sprinkled by the goddess and the nymphs, with inscriptions. Here is, besides, another pyramid of marble full of concealed

pipes, which spurt upon all who come within their reach." In the gardens of Lord Burleigh, at Theobalds, he tells us are nine knots, artificially and *exquisitely* made, one of which was set for the likeness of the king's arms. One might walk two miles in the walks before he came to the end.

In Hampton-Court, was a fountain with syrens and other statues by Fanelli. At Kensington were bastions and counterscarps of clipped yew and variegated holly, being the objects of wonder and admiration under the name of the siege of Troy. At Chatsworth the temporary cascade, the water-god, the copper-tree, and the jets-d'eau, still remain in all their glory.

The hands of Bridgman, Kent and Brown, and the pens of Addison, Pope and Walpole, have put all this ancient glory of Roman style to the flight; and driven us, perhaps, into danger of going too far after nature. The winding walks, the turfy lawns, the bowery shrubberies, the green slopes to the margin of waters, the retention of rocks and thickets where they naturally stood,—all this is very beautiful, and many a sweet elysian scene do they spread around our English houses. But in imitating nature we are apt to imitate her as she appears in her rudest places, and not as she would modify herself in the vicinity of human habitations. We are apt to make too little difference between the garden and the field; between the shrubbery and the wood. We are come to think that all which differs from wild nature is artificial, and therefore absurd. Something too much of this, I think, we are beginning to feel we have had amongst us. It has been the fashion to cry down all gardens as ugly and tasteless, which are not shaped by our modern

notions. The formalities of the French and Dutch have been sufficiently condemned. For my part, I like even them in their place. One would no more think of laying out grounds now in this manner, than of wearing Elizabethan ruffs, or bag-wigs and basket-hilted swords; yet the old French and Dutch gardens, as the appendages of a quaint old house, are in my opinion, beautiful. They are like many other things —not so much beautiful in themselves, as beautiful by association—as memorials of certain characters and ages. A garden, after all, is an artificial thing; and though formed from the materials of nature, may be allowed to mould them into something very different from nature. There is a wild beauty of nature, and there is a beauty in nature linked to art: one looks for a very different kind of beauty in fields and mountains, to what one does in a garden. The one delights you by a certain rude freedom and untamed magnificence; the other, by smoothness and elegance —by velvet lawns, bowery arbours, winding paths, fair branching shrubs, fountains, and juxta-position of many rare flowers.

It appears to me that it is an inestimable advantage as it regards our gardens, that the former taste of the nation has differed so much from its present one. Without this, what a loss of variety we should have suffered! If the taste of the present generation had been that of all past ages, what could there have been in the gardens of our past kings, nobles, and historical characters to mark them as strongly and emphatically as they are now marked? They now, indeed, seem to belong to men and things gone by; and I would as soon almost see one of our venerable cathedrals rased

with the ground, as one of these old gardens rooted up. There is something in them of a sombre and becoming melancholy. They are in keeping with the houses they surround, and the portraits in the galleries of those houses. When we wander through the pleached alleys, and by the time-stained fountains of these old gardens, perished years indeed seem to come back again to us. In the centre of some vast avenue of majestic elms or limes, sweeping their boughs to the ground, "the dial-stone aged and green" arrests our attention, and points, not to the present hour, but to the past. Our historic memories are intimately connected with such places. Our Howards, Essexes, Surreys, and Wolseys, were the magnificent founders and creators of such places; and in such, Shakspeare and Spenser, Milton and Bacon and Sidney mused. It is astonishing what numbers of our poets, philosophers, and literati, are connected with the history of our gardens by their writings, or love of them. Sir Henry Wotton, Parkinson, Ray, John Evelyn, Sir Walter Raleigh, Bacon, Addison, Pope, Sir William Temple, who not only wrote "the Garden of Epicurus," but so delighted in gardening that he directed in his will that his heart should be buried beneath the sun-dial in his garden at Moor-Park in Surrey, where it accordingly was deposited in a silver box: Horace Walpole, Locke, Cowley, Shenstone, Charles Cotton, Waller, Bishop Fleetwood, Spence, the author of Polymetis, Gilpin of the Forest Scenery, Mason, Dr. Darwin, Cowper, and many others, have their fame linked to the history or the love of gardens.

There is something very interesting too, in the

biography of our old patriarchs of English gardening. There is scarcely one of those large nurseries and gardens round London but is connected with them, as their founders, or improvers—as the Tradescants of Lambeth,—Londen and Wise of Brompton,—Philip Miller of Chelsea,—Gray of Fulham,—Furber of Kensington,—Lee of Hammersmith. It is cheering to observe how much our monarchs, from Henry VIII. to George III. were, with their principal nobility, almost to a man, whatever was their character in other respects, not even excepting the dissipated Charles II., munificent patrons of gardening, and founders of grand gardens. It is interesting to read of the giant labours, and now apparently curious locations of our early gardeners and herbalists. How Dr. Turner imbibed botanical knowledge from Lucas Ghinus at Bologna, and came and established a "garden of rare plants" at Kew; while Mrs. Gape had another at Westminster, which furnished the first specimens for Chelsea garden. How Ray, and Lobel, and Penny roamed everywhere in search of new plants. How Didymus Mountain published his "Gardener's Labyrinth:" how Sir Hugh Platt, of Lincoln's-Inn, gentleman, wrote the Jewel House of Art and Nature, the Paradise of Kew, and the Garden of Eden, and had, moreover, a garden in St. Martin's Lane. How the "Rei Rusticæ" of Conrad Heresbach, counsellor to the Duke of Cleve, was translated by Barnaby Googe, and reprinted by Gervase Markham, gentleman, of Gotham in Nottinghamshire. How old John Gerarde travelled, when young, up the Baltic, and had his "Physick Garden" in Holborn. How John Parkinson travelled

forty years before he wrote his "Paradisus," and was appointed by Charles I. for his Theatre of Plants, Botanicus Regius Primarius. How Gabriel Plattes, though styled by his cotemporaries, "an excellent genius," and "of an adventurous caste of mind," died miserably in the streets. How Walter Blythe of Oliver Cromwell's army wrote the "Survey of Husbandry," which Professor Martyn pronounces "an incomparable work." How Samuel Hartlib, the son of a Polish merchant, the friend of Milton, of Archbishop Usher and Joseph Meade, wrote his "Legacy," and assisted in establishing the embryo Royal Society; how John Tradescant was in Russia, and accompanied the fleet sent against the Algerines in 1620, and collected on that occasion plants in Barbary, and in the isles of the Mediterranean; and how his son John, afterwards made a voyage in pursuit of plants to Virginia, "and brought many new ones back with him." How their Museum, established in South Lambeth, and called "Tradescant's Ark," was the constant resort of the great and learned; how it fell into the hands of Elias Ashmole, and became the *Ashmolean* Museum.

These and such facts, shew us by what labours and steps our present garden-wealth has been raised; and diffuse an interest over a number of places familiar to us. Go, indeed, into what part of the island we will, we find some object of attraction and curiosity in the gardens attached to our old houses. As the coach passes the residence of Colonel Howard at Leven's Bridge, in Westmoreland, it stops, the passengers get out, and mount upon its top, and there behold a fine old Elizabethan house, standing in the midst of

a garden of that age, with all its topiary-work, its fountains, statues, and lawns. At Stony-Hurst in Lancashire, now a Jesuit's College, I was delighted to find a beautiful old garden of this description, which I have elsewhere described; and at Margam Abbey in South Wales, I found a fine assemblage of orange trees, the very trees which Sir Henry Wotton sent from Italy as a present to Queen Elizabeth. These trees had been thrown ashore here by the wreck of the vessel, and the owner of the place, by the queen's permission, built a splendid orangery to receive them, which stood in the centre of a garden surrounded on three sides by woody hills; and in which, fuchsias at least ten feet high, with stems thick as a man's arm, were growing in the open air, and tulip-trees large as the forest trees around. But what gave a still greater charm to this garden was, that the ruins of a fine old abbey stood here and there on its lawn; arches, overgrown with bushes, and the graceful pillars of a noble chapter-house, around whose feet lay stones of ancient tombs and curious sculpture. These are the things which give so delicious a variety to our English gardens: and when we bear in mind that many of those artifices and figures which we have been accustomed to treat with contempt as *Dutch*, are in reality *Roman;* that such things once stood in the magnificent gardens of Lucullus, and Sallust; that the Romans gathered them again from the Eastern nations; that they are not only classical, but that, like many of the rites of our church and religious festivals, they are the reliques of the most ancient times, I think we shall be inclined to regard them with a greater degree of in-

terest—not as objects to imitate or to place in any competition with our own more natural style, but as things which are of the most remote antiquity, and give a curious diversity to our country abodes. For my part, when I see even a fantastic peacock spreading its tail in yew in some old cottage or farm-house garden, I think of Pliny and his admiration of such topiary-work, and would not have it cut down for the world. Even those summer-houses built in trees, such as that built by the King of Belgium in Winter-Down wood, near Claremont; a sketch of which is presented in the title-page—were Roman fancies; were formed, Pliny tells us, amid the branches of any monarch trees that grew within their grounds, and that even Caligula had one in a plane-tree near his villa at Velilræ, which he called his Nest.

Here then to all the sweet nests of English gardens, new or old, we bid adieu, with blessings on their pleasantness.

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNTRY EXCITEMENTS.

Before closing this department of my work, I must just glance at a few occurrences which serve to give an occasional variety to rural life, and may be classed under the head of Country Excitements. These are races, race-balls, county-balls, concerts, musical festivals, elections, assizes, and confirmations. It will not be requisite to do more than merely mention the greater part of these, for to describe at length the race-ball and county-balls, the winter concerts of the county town and the musical festivals, would require a separate volume, and they indeed, after all, belong more to the town than to the country. Having, therefore, simply pointed them out as sources of occasional variety to wealthy families during their stay in the country, I shall confine myself in these concluding remarks, to those few particulars which belong more entirely to my subject. Balls and musical exhibitions are sufficiently alike everywhere, to need no distinct details here. It is enough that they serve to break the rural torpor of those who regard existence as only genuine during the London season. The application of the profits both of these balls, and of the musical festivals that have of late years been held in different

places, to the support of infirmaries, and to other public objects of benevolence, deserves the highest commendation. Thus dismissing these amusements, neither I nor my readers, I am sure, would wish to have the uproar and exasperation of the county election introduced into this peaceful volume; enough that when it does come to the country Hall, it comes, often as a hurricane, and frequently shakes it to the foundation, leaving in its track, debts and mortgages, shyness between neighbours, and rancour amongst old friends.

It would not be giving a faithful view of country life, however, were we to keep out of sight all agitating causes, and all existing drawbacks to the felicity for which such ample materials exist in it. Surveying those splendid materials, as displayed in the preceding chapters,—those abundant means and opportunities, which the wealthy possess for enjoying their lives in the country;—it would be giving a most one-sided view of the rural life of the rich, if we left it to be inferred that "the trail of the serpent" was not to be perceived at times in the fair lawns, and up the marble steps of rural palaces; that the great "Bubbly-Jock," (Turkey-Cock) which Scott contended that every man found in his path, did not shew himself there. The Serpent and the Bubbly-Jock which disturb and poison the rural life of the educated classes in England, are the very same which dash with bitter all English society in the same classes. They are the pride of life, and the pride of the eye. They are that continual struggle for precedence, and those jealousies which are generated by a false social system. Every man lives now-a-day for public observation.

He builds his house, and organizes his establishment, so as to strike public opinion as much as possible. Every man is at strife with his neighbour, in the matter of worldly greatness. The consequence is, that a false standard of estimation, both of men and things, is established—shew is substituted for real happiness; and no man is valued for his moral or intellectual qualities, so much as for the grandeur of his house, the style of his equipage, the richness of his dinner service, and the heavy extravagance of his dinners. The result of this is, that most are living to the full extent of their means, many beyond it, and few are finding in the whole round of their life, that alone, which better and higher natures seek—the interchange of heart and mind, which yields present delight, creates permanent attachments, and fills the memory with enduring satisfaction.

This, it must be confessed, is a wretched state of things; but it is one which every person conversant with society knows to exist, and which intelligent foreigners witness with unfeigned surprise. The worst of it is that this unnatural system of life becomes the most sensibly felt in the country. In large towns every man finds a sufficient circle after his own taste: there the petty influences of locality are broken up by the multitude of objects, and the ample choice in association. But in small towns, and country neighbourhoods, where wealthy or educated families are thinly scattered, nothing can be more lamentable, and were it not lamentable, nothing could be more ludicrous, than the state of rivalry, heart-burning, jealousy, personal mortification, or personal pride, from mere accidents of condition or favour. The titled have a fixed rank, and are

comparatively at their ease, but in the great mass of those who have wealth, more or less, without title, what mighty and eating sore is the struggle for distinction. In the little town, or thinly-scattered neighbourhood, every one is measuring out his imaginary dignity to see if it does not exceed, at least by some inches, that of one or other of his neighbours. The lower you descend in the scale, the more exacting becomes the spirit of exclusiveness. The professions look down upon the trades; the trades on one another. Everywhere the same uneasy spirit shews itself. Nothing can be more ludicrous, or amusing to the philosophic spectator, than to observe how leadership is assumed in every country neighbourhood, by certain wealthy families; how carefully that leadership is avoided and opposed by other families. How the majority of families aspire to move in one or the other circle; what wretched and anomolous animals those feel themselves that are not recognized by either. How the man who drives his close carriage, looks down upon him who only drives his barouche or phaeton; how both contemn the poor occupier of a gig. I have heard of a gentleman of large fortune who, for some years after his residence in a particular neighbourhood, did not set up his close carriage, but afterwards feeling it more agreeable to do so, was astonished to find himself called upon by a host of carriage-keeping people, who did not seem previously aware of his existence; and rightly deeming the calls to be made upon his carriage, rather than himself, sent round his empty carriage to deliver cards in return. It was a biting satire on a melancholy condition of society, the full force of which can only be perceived by such

as have heard the continual exultations of those who have dined with such a great person on such a day, and the equally eager complaints of others, of the pride and exclusiveness they meet with; who have listened to the long catalogue of slights, dead cuts, and offences, and witnessed the perpetual heart-burnings incident to such a state of things. These are the follies that press the charm of existence out of the hearts of thousands, and make the country often a purgatory where it might be a paradise.

There is another cause which diminishes in a great degree the enjoyment that might be found in the country, and that is, the almost total cessation of walking amongst the wealthy. Since the universal use of carriages, for anything I can see, thousands of people might just as well be born without legs at all. It would be easy to move them from the bed to the carriage,—thence to the dinner-table, and again to bed. In the country, and especially in the country not far from towns, how rarely do you see the rich except in their luxurious carriages! How rarely do you meet them walking, or even on horse-back, as you used to do! Sir Roger de Coverley rode on horseback to the assizes in his day—were he living now, he would roll there in his carriage—lest some one should imagine that he had mortgaged his estate, and laid down his carriage in retrenchment. During the twelve months that I have resided in this neighbourhood—a neighbourhood studded all over with wealthy houses, nothing has surprised me, and the friends who have visited me here, so much as the great rarity of seeing any of the wealthy classes on their legs. With the exception of the Queen and her

attendant ladies, who during the then Princess's abode at Claremont, might be every day met in the winter, walking in frost and snow, and facing the sharpest winds of the sharpest weather, I scarcely remember to have met half-a-dozen of the wealthy classes on foot a mile from their residences. And yet what splendid, airy heaths, what delicious woods, what nooks of bowery foliage, what views into far landscapes, are there all around! It is true, as some of them have observed, that they walk in their own grounds; but what grounds, however beautiful, can compensate for the fresh feeling of the heath and the down; for the dim solemnity of the wild wood; for open, breezy hills, the winding lane, the sight of rustic cottages by the forest side, the tinkle of the herd or the sheep bell, and all the wild sounds and aspects of earth and heaven, to be met with only in the free regions of nature? They who neglect to walk, or confine their strolls merely to the lawn and the shrubbery, lose nine-tenths of the enjoyment of the country. Those young men, whom it is a pleasure to see with their knapsacks on their backs ranging over moor and mountain, by lakes or ocean, in Scotland or Wales, taste more of the life of life in a few summer months than many dwellers in the country ever dream of through their whole existence. I speak advisedly, for I traverse the country in all directions, let me be where I will; and if any *ladies* think themselves too delicate for walking, I can point them out delicate ladies too that have made excursions on foot through mountain regions of five hundred miles at a time, and recur to those seasons as amongst the most delightful of their lives.

But my desire that all should make their country life as happy as it is capable of being made—which must be by living more to nature and less to fashion—by using both their physical and moral energies; by respecting themselves, and leaving the respect of others to follow as the natural result of a true and pure tone of spirit—is detaining me too long. I must hasten on; and amongst the most prominent of the country excitements, give a passing word to racing. If any one wishes to know how far the turf influences the course of country life, he has only to read the following passage from Nimrod. "Deservedly high as Newmarket stands in the history of the British turf, it is but as a speck on the ocean when compared with the sum total of our provincial meetings, of which there are about one hundred and twenty in England, Scotland, and Wales—several of them twice in the year. Epsom, Ascot, York, Doncaster, and Goodwood stand first in respect of the value of the prizes, the rank of the company, and the interest attached to them in the sporting world; although several other cities and towns have lately exhibited very tempting bills of fare to owners of good race-horses. In point of antiquity we believe the Roodee of Chester claims pre-eminence of all country race-meetings;—and certainly it has long been in high repute. Falling early in the racing year—always the first Monday in May—it is most numerously attended by the families of the extensive and very aristocratic neighbourhood in which it is placed; and always continues five days."—*The Turf*, p. 246.

Every one who has seen the crowds of wealthy people who flock to a celebrated race-meeting, and

throng the stand and the carriage stations, with brilliant dresses and gay equipages, may imagine, then, how much excitement is spread through that class of society during their stay in the country; by one hundred and twenty race-meetings in one quarter or other of the island; especially as the greater part of these occur during the months that they are absent from town. So having read the passage quoted from Nimrod, he has only to turn to the volume itself —a volume written with great ability; and, making allowance for the author's sporting predilections, in an excellent spirit, and he will thus find that course described as such a horrible resort for black-legs and desperadoes, of traitorous jockeys, and *poisoning* trainers, as makes one at once recoil from the recital, and wonder that our young nobles and gentlemen should commit themselves and their fortunes to such hands; or that the fair and the refined should consent to gaze on such a scene of infamy. Hear Nimrod's own words—"How many fine domains have been shared amongst these hosts of rapacious sharks, during the last two hundred years! and unless the system be altered—how many more are doomed to fall into the same gulph! For, we lament to say, the evil has increased; all heretofore, indeed, has been "tarts and cheesecakes" to the villanous proceedings of the last twenty years on the English turf." Let us move on to less repulsive scenes.

Amongst these may be reckoned the periodical arrivals of the bishops and the judges. The arrival of the bishop to perform the ceremony of confirmation, is but a triennial occurrence, but it is one of the most imposing of the rites of the church. The flocking of

the clergy and their families to town; the processions of country children on foot, and led by the parish clerk, or schoolmaster, or in carts and other rustic vehicles; the gathering of the children of the rich towards the church in their white dresses, and in gay carriages; the assembling of all classes in the common temple of their religion; the solemnity of the address and the imposition of hands by the prelate; the stately music of the organ; and the silent looking on of the congregated people, all combine to produce a very striking spectacle—a spectacle which to those who believe in its essentiality and efficacy, has something in it touching and beautiful.

But perhaps the parade of the assize time, is the most picturesque of this class of occurrences. There is more of the old English ceremony, custom, and costume about it. The judges who go through the land as the representatives of majesty, certainly go through it *en prince*. Nothing can be more unlike than their progress to, and their state in, the courts in town, and the same things in their provincial tour of justice. In town you may see the Lord Chief Justice mount his horse at his own door, and ride quietly away towards Westminster Hall. You may see Lord Abinger in the Court of Exchequer, sitting very much at his ease in his black gown and wig of modest dimensions, dispatching business in a work-a-day manner; but in the country you find these very men arrayed in their scarlet and ermine, seated in much greater state, and dispensing justice in a much fuller court than, except on extraordinary occasions, attends them in town.

The high-sheriff of every county, selected from

its best families, in preparation for the arrival of the county judge, has put his equipage and train in order. His carriage, his horses, his harness, all have undergone a rigid examination, and are all put into the highest condition that paint, gilding, varnish, lining, and plate can bestow; or if he be a young man of some spirit and ambition, he has purchased a new carriage for the occasion. His tenants and household servants, to the number of forty or fifty, have been put into a new livery in the cut of the old yeoman, and generally of some bright or peculiar colour, green, blue, white, or delicate drab, as indeed the livery of the gentleman may be. Mounted on their horses, and with their javelins or halberds, and preceded by two trumpeters, who, old Aubrey can tell you, are a very ancient essential on such occasions, they escort the sheriff on his way to meet the judges. The sheriff who has thus showily appointed what are provincially termed his javelin-men, has not in the meantime neglected himself. He has put on at least a court dress, and in cases where he has happened to be a man of taste, and a man of figure to boot, he has put on a rich suit of the fashion of Sir Charles Grandison, or of some one of his ancestors, as he stands in full-length portraiture in his family gallery. He issues from his hall, arrayed perhaps in a rich mulberry coloured coat with huge embroidered cuffs and button-holes, huge gold buttons, and lining of primrose serge; a splendid waistcoat of gold brocaded satin, with ample pockets and flaps reaching half-way to his knees; satin breeches, and silk stockings with immense clocks; large gold buckles at his knees and upon his shoes. Add to this his sword, his cocked

hat, and his cravat and ruffles of fine point lace, and you have the high sheriff in all his glory, just as we saw him in one of our county assize courts not many years ago, sitting on the right hand of the judge; and it must be confessed in admirable keeping with his old-world robes of scarlet and ermine. Well, he enters the county town with his troop of javelin-men, his trumpeters blowing stoutly before him. He takes up his lodgings there, and on the morning of the judge's approach, he marches out in the same style, followed by a long train of the gentlemen and trades-men of the place, who are anxious to testify their respect to the ancient forms of justice, and the representative of the monarch. He advances some mile or two on the way by which the judge is to arrive. There the procession halts, generally in a position which commands a view of the road by which the judge is expected. Anon, there is a stir, a looking out amongst them, your eye follows theirs, and you see a carriage, dusty and travel-soiled, come driving rapidly on. It is that of the judge. As they drive up, the javelin-men and gentlemen uncover; the sheriff descends from his carriage; his gowned and be-wigged lordship descends from his; the sheriff makes his bow and his compliments; the judge enters the carriage of the sheriff with him, his own carriage falls into the rear, and the procession now moves on towards the town, with bannered trumpets blowing, and amid a continually increasing crowd of spectators. There is something very quaint and old English in the whole affair; and as I have seen the sheriff and his train thus, waiting the approach of the judge on some rising ground in the public road, the scene has

brought back to my imagination a feeling of the past times—simpler in heart than the present, but more formal in manner, and perhaps fonder of solemn parade. But the bells are ringing merrily to welcome the learned judge, and thousands are thronging to see the sight of the sheriff and his men, and to catch a glimpse of the judge's wig as the coach passes, and many of them to wonder how the sheriff can seem so much at his ease with such an awful man: while within the strong walls of the prison, the sounds of bells and the trampling feet of the crowds without, are causing stout hearts and miserable hearts to tremble and feel chill.

Well, the procession and the throng "go sounding through the town," and the court being opened in due form, they arrive at the judge's lodgings, whence, after a suitable time allowed for the judge's refreshment, they proceed to church. Whatever may be the effect of this custom of the judge's going to church before proceeding to discharge his awful duties of deciding upon the destinies of his fellow men, it is a beautiful one, and bespeaks in those who instituted it, a just sense of the value of human life, and of the true source whence all right judgment must proceed. It was well, and more than well, that the judge should be sent to hear from the Christian minister, that the temper in which a judge should sit to decide the fate of his fellow-mortals, should be that of the Christian—the divine union of justice and mercy. It was well that he should be reminded that every act of his judgment in the court about to open, must one day be rejudged, in a court and before a judge, from which there can be no appeal.

As they move on towards the great mother-church, thousands on thousands throng to gaze. Every window presents its quota of protruded heads; every flight of steps before the doors of houses, and every other elevated spot, is occupied. Boys are hanging by lamp-posts, and on iron pallisades, like bats. The procession used to be much enlivened by the presence of the mayor and corporation in their robes, and with the mace borne before them; but the New Corporation Act has led to a woful stripping of this pageant. The sheriff selects the clergyman to preach on the occasion, who is generally some young friend or relative whom he wishes to bring into notice. This ceremony being over, the judge returns to the court; the grand jury, selected from the gentlemen of the county, present their bills, and the trials proceed. In the sheriff's gallery may be seen some of his friends, perhaps the ladies of his family and other acquaintances, with others, all introduced by ticket; on the bench by the judge, may often be seen seated with the sheriff, some great man or lady of the neighbourhood, especially if some trial in which one of their own body, some disputed will which involves a large property, or similar cause of interest, draws them from their homes, and fills the court to suffocation. While the court continues, day by day you see the train of javelin-men come marching on foot with the state carriage of the sheriff, to conduct him from his lodgings to those of the judge, and back again at the close of the court in the evening, till the trials are ended; and judge, sheriff, gay carriage, with its splendid hammer-cloth, jolly coachman, and slim footmen, in their cocked hats and flaxen wigs, javelin-

men, and crowd, all meet and vanish away, and the excitement of the assize is over for another half-year.

Such are the principal country excitements; and to these may be added those of another class, which have sprung up of late years, and have done much good—the floral and horticultural shews. These have been warmly patronized by the aristocracy; and it forms a striking feature in modern country life, to see carriages and pedestrians hastening, on certain days to certain places, where different flowers and fruits, in their respective seasons, are displayed with great taste, and with brilliant effect. The place of meeting is sometimes at a country inn, where, on the bowling-green tents are pitched, in which the flowers or fruits are exhibited, and the whole scene is extremely gay. Such a one I saw the other day at Kingston Hill, near Richmond Park—a Dahlia shew: on the end of the house an invitation to all England being gorgeously emblazoned in dahlia-flowers, surmounted by the crown royal, and the good English initials Q. V.; looking as though the worthy horticulturists meant to set the rational example of using the English language to English people.

PART II.

LIFE OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLISH FARMER.

THERE are few things which give one such a feeling of the prosperity of the country, as seeing the country people pour into a large town on market-day. There they come, streaming along all the roads that lead to it from the wide country round. The foot-paths are filled with a hardy and homely succession of pedestrians, men and women, with their baskets on their arms, containing their butter, eggs, apples, mushrooms, walnuts, nuts, elderberries, blackberries, bundles of herbs, young pigeons, fowls, or whatever happens to be in season. There are boys and girls too, similarly loaded, and also with baskets of birds' nests in spring, cages of young birds, and old birds, baskets of tame rabbits, and bunches of cowslips, primroses, and all kinds of flowers, and country productions imaginable.

The carriage-road is equally alive, with people riding and driving along; farmers and country gentlemen, country clergymen, parish overseers, and various other personages, drawn to the market-town by some real or imagined business, are rattling forward on horseback, or in carriages of various kinds, gigs, and spring-carts, and carts without springs. There are carriers' wagons, and covered carts without end, many of them shewing from their open fronts, whole troops of women snugly seated; while their dogs chained beneath, go struggling and barking along, pushing their heads forward in their collars every minute as if they would hang themselves. This is in the morning; and in the afternoon, you see them pouring out again, and directing their course to many a far-off hamlet and old-fashioned abode. But there is a wide difference between coming in and going out. The wagons and carts go heavily and soberly, for they are laden with good solid commodities, groceries and draperies, mops, brushes, hardware and crockery, newspapers for the politicians, and sundry parcels of teas, sugars, and soaps, and such et ceteras for the village shops; but the farmers go riding and driving out three times as fast as they came in, for they are primed with good dinners, and strong beer. They have chaffered, and smoked, and talked with the great grazier, and the great corn-factor, and their horses are full of corn too, and away they go, in fours and fives, filling the whole width of the road, and raising a dust, if there be the least dust to be raised, or making the mud fly in all directions; away they go, talking all together, while their horses are trotting at such a pace as one would think would shake the very teeth out of their heads. The sober foot-

people who are trudging homeward more soberly than they came, say, as they fly past, "One wouldn't think times very bad neither." And the carriers hold their horses' heads as they rush past, and smiling significantly, say, just as they are gone past,—"Well done my lads! that's it; go it, my lads, go it! Yo riden, though your horses go a-foot!"

There is no class of men, if times are but tolerably good, that enjoy themselves so highly as farmers. They are little kings. Their concerns are not huddled into a corner, as those of the town tradesman are. In town, many a man who turns thousands of pounds per week, is hemmed in close by buildings, and cuts no figure at all. A narrow shop, a contracted warehouse, without an inch of room besides to turn him, on any hand; without a yard, a stable, or outhouse of any description; perhaps hoisted aloft, up three or four pair of dirty stairs, is all the room that the wealthy tradesman often can bless himself with; and there, day after day, month after month, year after year, he is to be found, like a bat in a hole of a wall, or a toad in the heart of a stone, or of an oak tree. Spring, and summer, and autumn go round; sunshine and flowers spread over the world; the sweetest breezes blow, the sweetest waters murmur along the vales, but they are all lost upon him; he is the doleful prisoner of mammon, and so he lives and dies. The farmer would not take the wealth of the world on such terms. His concerns, however small, spread themselves out in a pleasant amplitude both to his eye and heart. His house stands in its own stately solitude; his offices and outhouses stand round extensively, without any stubborn and limiting contraction; his acres stretch

over hill and dale; there his flocks and herds are feeding; there his labourers are toiling,—he is king and sole commander there. He lives amongst the purest air, and the most delicious quiet. Often when I see those healthy, hardy, full-grown sons of the soil going out of town, I envy them the freshness and the repose of the spots to which they are going. Ample old-fashioned kitchens, with their chimney-corners of the true, projecting, beamed and seated construction, still remaining; blazing fires in winter, shining on suspended hams and flitches, guns supported on hooks above, dogs basking on the hearth below; cool, shady parlours in summer, with open windows, and odours from garden and shrubbery blowing in; gardens wet with purest dews, and humming at noon-tide with bees; and green fields and verdurous trees, or deep woodlands lying all round, where a hundred rejoicing voices of birds or other creatures are heard, and winds blow to and fro, full of health and life-enjoyment. How enviable do such places seem to the fretted spirits of towns, who are compelled not only to bear their burthen of cares, but to enter daily into the public strife against selfish, evil, and ever-spreading corruption. When one calls to mind the simple abundance of farm-houses, their rich cream and milk, and unadulterated butter, and bread grown upon their own lands, sweet as that which Christ broke, and blessed as he gave to his disciples; their fruits ripe and fresh-plucked from the sunny wall, or the garden bed, or the pleasant old orchard; when one casts one's eyes upon, or calls to one's memory the aspect of these houses, many of them so antiquely picturesque, or so bright-looking and comfortable, in deep retired valleys, by beautiful streams,

or amongst fragrant woodlands, one cannot help saying with King James of Scotland, when he met Johnny Armstrong:—

What want these knaves that a king should have?

But it is not its outward and surrounding advantages merely, which gives its zest to the life of the farmer. He is more proud of it, and more attached to it than any other class of men, be they whom they may, are of theirs. The whole heart, soul, and being of the farmer are in his profession. The members of other professions and trades, however full they may be of their concerns, have their mouths tied up by the etiquette of society. A man is not allowed to talk of his trade concerns except at the risk of being laughed at, and being set down as an egotistic ignoramus. But who shall laugh at or scout the farmer for talking of his concerns? Of nothing else does he, in nine cases out of ten, think, talk, or care. And though he may be called a bore by all other classes, what concerns it him? for other classes are just as great bores to him, and he seeks not their company. The farmers are a large class, and they associate and converse principally with each other. "Their talk is of bullocks," it is true, but to them it is the most interesting talk of all. What is so delightful to them as to meet at each other's houses, and with bright glasses of nectarous ale, or more potent spirit sparkling before them, and pipe in mouth, to talk of markets, rents, tithes, new improvements, and the promise of crops? To walk over their lands of a Sunday afternoon together, and pronounce on the condition of growing corn, turnips, and grass; on this drainage, or that neighbour's odd management; on the appearance of sheep, cattle, and

horses. And this is to be excused, and in a great degree to be admired. For those are no artificial objects on which they expend their lives and souls; they are the delightful things of nature on which they operate; and nature operates with them in all their labours, and sweetens them to their spirits. This is the grand secret of their everlasting attachment to, and enjoyment of agricultural life. They work with nature, and only modulate and benefit by her functions, as she takes up, quickens, and completes the work of their hands. There is a living principle in all their labours, which distinguishes them from most other trades. The earth gives its strength to the seed they throw into it—to the cattle that walk upon it. The winds blow, the waters run for them; the very frosts and snows of winter give salutary checks to the rankness of vegetation, and lighten the soil, and destroy what is noxious for them; and every principle of animal and vegetable existence and organization co-operates to support and enrich them. There is a charm in this which must last, while the spirit of man feels the stirrings of the spirit and power of God around him. It may be said that rude farmers do not reason on these things in this manner. No, in many, too many instances I grant it; but they feel. There is scarcely any bosom so cloddish but feels more or less of this, and by no other cause can an explanation be given of the enthusiasm of farmers for their profession. It is not because they can sooner enrich themselves by it—that they are more independent in it—that they have greater social advantages in it. In all these particulars the balance is in favour of the active and enterprising tradesman; but it is this

charm which has infused its sweetness into the bosoms of all rural people in all ages of the world. From the days of the patriarchs to the present, what expressions of delight the greatest minds have uttered on behalf of such a life. Think of Homer, Theocritus, Virgil, and Horace; of Cicero, whom I have elsewhere quoted, and of the many great men of this country, some of whom too I have noticed, who have devoted themselves with such eagerness to it.

That farmers are as intelligent as a parallel grade of society in large towns I do not mean to assert; that they are as truly aware of, and as united to defend their real interests I will assert as little. Their solitary and isolated mode of existence weighs against them in these points; but that they have generally a sounder morality than a similar class of townsmen is indisputable. They have a simplicity of mind as well as manners that is more than an equivalent for the polish and conventional customs of society, and with this a cordiality that is very delightful, and very rarely now to be found—the good, homely heartiness of Old English days.

They, indeed, so vividly enjoy the common blessings of life, from their vigorous health, and unvitiated appetites, as well as from the cravings of their inner being, finding their food in the daily communion with nature, instead of that book-knowledge which is so extensively diffused through all classes of the city, and which, too commonly, while it quickens the intellect, and widens the sphere of observation, I am sorry to say, deadens the human sympathies and distorts the heart—that they make so much of their kindness appear in heaping upon you

bodily comforts and refreshments as is often truly ludicrous. They would have you eat and drink for ever. One meal succeeds to another with a profusion and an importunity of hospitality that are overwhelming. They eat their bread with a sweetness and a capacity, generated by their active and laborious habits, that we, who lead more sedentary lives, and with minds and energies dissipated by a hundred objects unknown to them, have no idea of. People of all other classes place a great portion of their happiness in giving and eating great feasts; but a farmer seems to think all the good things of life are involved in feasting, and would feast you not once a year, but every day, and all day long, if he could.

Let us just glance at the routine of one day of good fellowship, such as is seen in farm-houses where there is plenty, and yet no great pretence to gentility. We have seen many such scenes.

The farmer invites his friends to dine with him. He will have a party. Suppose it at some period of the year when he is least busy; for his engagements depending on the progress of the seasons, and his whole wealth being at the mercy of the elements, he cannot postpone his duties, but must take them as they fall out. Suppose it then just before the commencement of hay-harvest, for then he has a short pause, between the putting in of his last crop of potatoes or corn, shutting up his fields, and clearing his green-corn lands, and that moment when the first scythe enters his hay-fields, when a course of arduous and anxious labours begins, that will not cease till all his crops are safely housed, hay, corn, beans, pease, and potatoes. Suppose at this pause in the growing

time of summer, or after harvest, or amid the festive days of Christmas, he feels himself comparatively at leisure, in good spirits, and disposed to enjoy himself. He and his wife arrange their plans. Invitations are sent. On market day he lays in all necessaries,—tea, coffee, prime cuts of beef and other meat; wine and spirits; sugar and spices. At home there is busy preparation. His garden is cleaned up: an operation of rare occurrence with a busy farmer, who thinks so much of his fields that he thinks but little of his garden. His stables and his rick-yard are put in order. The very manes and tails of his horses are trimmed, for all will have to pass under the critical notice of his friends, and he feels his professional character at stake. In the house there is equal activity. There is a world of cleaning and setting in order. Floors are scoured. The best carpets are put down. This room is found to want fresh staining; painting wants doing here and there, both within and without. Trees also want nailing and trimming on the walls; and it is probable there may want some spout repairing, or tiles renewing, that have often been talked of, but never could have time found for their doing. The house and all about it look fifty per cent. the better. The neatly cleaned walks and closely mown grass-plots; the brightly-cleaned windows, and the scarlet curtains, and the purely white blinds seen within, give an air of completeness that is very satisfactory.

And then within begin the mighty preparations for the feast. Geese, turkeys, ducks and fowls are killed and pulled, and part are cooked, and part are made ready for cooking. If the farmer shoots, and it be

the season, there are hares and rabbits, pheasants and partridges, brought to the larder; if he do not, he makes friends with the keeper, who occasionally takes a social pipe and glass with him; or he makes a direct request to his landlord for this indulgence. Hams are boiled; pies are made; puddings of the richest composition are put together. If it be Christmas, loud is the chopping of meat for minced-pies; busy the mixing of spices; and the washing and picking of currants and raisins; and pork-pies and sausages of most savoury and approved manipulation are raised into material existence. If the sucking-pig escapes whipping—and we hope no honest farmer is now cruel enough for this operation—creams and syllabubs do not; they are whipped, not to death, but into life. There are blanc-mange and jellies, crystalline and fragrant; clouted creams, and cream of strawberries, raspberries, and I know not what melting and delicious things. And O! such cheese-cakes, and such patties, and such little cakes of various names and natures, for tea and *entre mets*, and dessert. I see the oven-door open and shut, as the iron tray of nicely laden patty-pans goes into the oven, or comes out with a rich perfection, and with odours most delicious, most mouth-melting, most inexpressible! The good and skilful dame, and the no less skilful and comely daughters, if she have them, and they are grown up to years of discretion in these delicate and culinary arts—what is not their depth of occupation! What glowing looks are theirs; what speculations; what contrivances and anticipations! I would fain take an easy chair in some cool corner of this milk-and-honey-flowing kitchen, and watch all their sweet employment, and

hear all their sweet words in a grateful silence. But they are far from the end of their labours. Nuts, walnuts, apples and pears, and other fruit, according as the season may be, are produced from their stores, or from the sunny walls and trees, wiped from every trace of mould or dust from the store-room, and placed in their proper receivers of glass, or china, or possibly of plate. Wine and spirit decanters are to be washed and carefully dried, and to be charged with their bright contents. The discovery of the richest cheese in the whole cheese-room is to be made by tasting; butter is to be moulded in small cakes, and imprinted with patterns of the deepest and most elegant figure, and a thousand other things made, or done, of which the tasting were to be desired rather than the catalogue to be particularized, for, wonderful and manifold are all thy works, O thou accomplished spouse of a wealthy farmer!

What dainties has that greater oven received into its more capacious cavern. Bread of the most exquisite fineness; and pies of varied character—fruit, pork, beef-steak, and giblet—if in Devon or Cornwall, *sweet* giblet, a pie that all England besides knows not of: figgy-bread, and saffron-cake of transcendant brilliance and taste.

And then comes the great day! The guests are invited to dinner; but they have been enjoined to *come early*, and they come early with a vengeance. They will not come as the guests of night-loving citizens and aristocrats come, at from six to nine in the evening;—no, at ten and eleven in the morning you shall see their faces, that never yet were ashamed of day-light, and that tell of fresh air and early hours.

Then come rattling in, sundry vehicles with their cargoes of men and women; lively salutations are exchanged; the horses are led away to the stables, and the guests into the house to doff great coats and cloaks, hats and bonnets, and sit down to lunch. And there it is ready set out. "They 'll want something after their drive," says the host. "To be sure," says the hostess; and there is plenty in truth. A boiled ham, a neat's tongue; a piece of cold beef; fowls and beef-steak-pie; tarts, and bread, cheese and butter; coffee for the ladies, and fine old ale for the gentlemen.

"Now do help yourselves," exclaims the host from one end of the table, "I am sure you must be very hungry after such a ride." "I am sure you must indeed," echoes the hostess from the other, while a dozen voices cry all at once, "Oh, really I don't think I can touch a bit. We got breakfast the moment before we set off;" and all the time deep are the incisions made into the various viands: and plentifully heaped are plates; and bright liquor is poured into glasses, and a great deal of talk of this and that, and inquiries after this and that person go on; a hearty lunch is made, and the gentlemen are ready to set out and look about them. They are warned by the hostess to remember that dinner will be on table at one o'clock—"exactly at one!" and assuming hats and sticks, away they go.

While they perambulate the farm, and pass learned judgments on land, cattle, and crops; and make besides excursions into neighbouring lands, to some particular experiment in management, or extraordinary production of combined art and nature, our

hostess shews her female friends her dairy, her cheese-room, her poultry-yard, and discussions as scientific are going on, on the best modes of fattening calves, rearing turkey broods, and on all the most approved manipulations of cheese and butter. The quantities produced from a certain number of cows are compared, and many wonders expressed that lands of apparent equality of richness should some yield little butter and much cheese, and others little cheese and much butter; facts well known to all such ladies, but not easy of explanation by heads that pretend to see further into the heart of a difficulty than they do. A walk is probably proposed and undertaken through the garden and orchard, and flowers and fruits are descanted on; and all this time in the house roasting, and boiling, and baking are going on gloriously. Savoury steams are rolling about under the ceilings; busy damsels with faces rosier than ever, are running to and fro on the floors; stable-boys are turned into knife-cleaners; and plough-lads into peelers of potatoes, and watchers of boiling pots, and turnspits.

The hour arrives; and a sound of loud voices somewhere at hand announces that our agricultural friends are returned punctually to their time, with many a joke on their fears of the ladies' tongues. Not that they seemed to want any dinner—no, they made such a lunch; but they had such a natural fear of being scolded. Well, here they all are;—and here are the ladies all in full dress. Hands that have been handling prime stock, or rooting in the earth, or thrust into hay-ricks and corn-heaps, are washed, and down they sit to such a dinner as might satisfy a crew of shipwrecked men. There are seldom any of your

"wishy-washy soups," except it be very cold weather, and seldom more than two courses; but then they *are* courses! All of the meat kind seems set on the table at once. Off go the covers, and what a perplexing but unconsumable variety! Such pieces of roast beef, veal, and lamb; such hams, and turkeys, and geese; such game, and pies of pigeons or other things equally good, with vegetables of all kinds in season—peas, potatoes, cauliflowers, kidney-beans, lettuces, and whatever the season can produce. The most potent of ale and porter, the most crystalline and cool water, are freely supplied, and wine for those that will. When these things have had ample respect paid to them, they vanish, and the table is covered with plum-puddings and fruit tarts, cheesecakes, syllabubs, and all the nicknackery of whipped creams and jellies that female invention can produce. And then, a dessert of equal profusion. Why should we tantalize ourselves with the vision of all those nuts, walnuts, almonds, raisins, fruits, and confections? Enough that they are there; that the wine circulates —foreign and English—port and sherry—gooseberry and damson—malt and birch—elderflower and cowslip, —and loud is the clamour of voices male and famale. If there be not quite so much refinement of tone and manner, quite so much fastidiousness of phrase and action, as in some other places, there is at least more hearty laughter, more natural jocularity, and many a

Random shot of country wit,

as Burns calls it. A vast of talk there is of all the country round; every strange circumstance; every incident and change of condition, and new alliance

amongst their mutual friends, and acquaintances, pass under review. The ladies withdraw; and the gentlemen draw together; spirits take place of wine, and pipes are lighted. We know what subjects will interest them—farming improvements and politics—and so it goes till tea-time.

When summoned to tea, there are additional faces. The pastor and his wife, perhaps a son and daughter, or daughters are there; and there is the clerk too,—the very model of respect and reverence towards his clerical superior. Whatever that learned authority asserts, this zealous and "dearly-beloved Moses" testifies. He calls attention to what the vicar says; he repeats with great satisfaction his sayings. There too, is the surgeon, and often the veterinary surgeon, especially as he also is often a farmer, and in intercourse with all the farmers far and near. This may seem an odd jumble of ranks, but it is no more odd than true. Who that has seen anything of rural life has not seen odder medleys? Besides, money in all grades of society can do miracles. There are clergymen in many parishes who maintain their own ideas of dignity, and seldom move out of the circle of squires and dames; but there are others, and in perfectly rural districts there are abundance of others, that know how to mix more freely with the yeomanry of their flocks, and lose nothing neither. If they respect themselves, they insure the respect, and what is better, the attachment of their hearers.

But the vicar's presence on such a day is felt. There is a more palpable approximation towards silence;—a drawing tighter of the reins of conversational freedom. The great talkers of after-dinner

are now become great listeners, and often on such occasions I have seen a scene worthy of the sound sense of English yeomen; for the pastor addresses his observations and inquiries now to this individual, and now to that; and now converses in a tone of pleasant humour with the ladies; so that you may often hear as sober discussions on the passing topics of the day, and on the prospects of the country, and especially of that part of it to which they belong, delivered in a homely manner perhaps, but with a discrimination and practical knowledge that are very gratifying. And on the part of the females you shall see so many symptoms of good-heartedness and real matronly mind as make you feel that sense, soul, and true sympathies are of no particular grade, or particular style of life.

But there must be a dance for the young, and there are cards for the more sedate; and then again, to a supper as profuse, with its hot game, and fowls, and fresh pastry, as if it had been the sole meal cooked in the house that day. The pastor and his company depart; the wine and spirits circulate; all begin to talk of parting, and are loth to part, till it grows late; and they have some of them six or seven miles to go, perhaps, on a pitch-dark night, through bye-ways, and with roads not to be boasted of. All at once however, up rise the men to go, for their wives, who asked, and looked with imploring eyes in vain, now show themselves cloaked and bonneted, and the carriages are heard with grinding wheels at the door. There is a boisterous shaking of hands, a score of invitations to come and do likewise, given to their entertainers, and they mount and away! When you

see the blackness of the night, and consider that they have not eschewed good liquor, and perceive at what a rate they drive away, you expect nothing less than to hear the next day, that they have dashed their vehicles to atoms against some post, or precipitated themselves into some quarry; but all is right. They best know their own capabilities, and are at home, safe and sound.

Such is a specimen of the festivities of what may be called the middle and substantial class of farmers; and the same thing holds, in degree, to the very lowest grade of them. The smallest farmer will bring you out the very best he has; he will spare nothing, on a holiday occasion; and his wife will present you with her simple slice of cake, and a glass of currant, or cowslip wine, with an *empressement*, and a welcome that you feel to the heart is real, and a bestowal of a real pleasure to the offerer.

CHAPTER II.

THE ENGLISH FARMER, AS OPERATED UPON BY MODERN CAUSES AND THEORIES.

Cobbett complains that the farmer has been spoiled by the growth of luxurious habits and effeminacy in the nation. That the simple old furniture is cast out of their houses; that carpets are laid on their floors; that there are sofas and pianos to be found where there used to be wooden benches, and the spinning-wheel; that the daughters are sent to boarding-school, instead of to market; and the sons, instead of growing up sturdy husbandmen, like their fathers, are made clerks, shopkeepers, or some such "skimmy-dish things."

It is true enough that the general style of living and furnishing has progressed amongst the farmers as amongst all other classes of the community. And perhaps there has been too much of this. But it should be recollected that Cobbett was opposed to popular education altogether. He would have the rural population physically well off, but it should be physically only. He would have them feed and work and sleep like their sturdy horses or oxen: but is such a state desirable? Is it not far more noble,

far more truly human, to have all classes partaking, as far as their circumstances will allow them, of the pleasures of mind? I would have real knowledge go hand in hand with real religious principle and moral feeling, and where they go, a certain and inseparable degree of refinement of manner and embellishment of abode will go with them. Would I have the follies and affectations of the modern boarding-school go into the farm-house? By no means. It is by the circulation of heathful knowledge that all this is to be rooted out, and the race of finiking and half-genteel, and wholly ridiculous boarding-school misses to be changed into usefully taught and really valuable and amiable women. We should avoid one extreme as the other.

It should be recollected too, that amongst farmers are to be found men of all ranks and grades. Farming has been, and is, a fashionable pursuit. We have ducal farmers, and from them all degrees downwards. Gentlemen's stewards, educated men, are farmers; and many farmers are persons whose capital employed in their extensive concerns, would purchase the estates of nobles. All these, of course, live and partake of the habits, general character, and refinements of the classes to which they, by their wealth, really belong: and amongst the medium class of farmers we find as little aspiring of gentility, as amongst the same grade of tradesmen. Nay, go into the really rural and retired parts of the country, and they are simple and rustic enough. Let those who doubt it go into the dales of Yorkshire; into the Peak, and retirements of Derbyshire; into the vales of Nottinghamshire, and midland counties; let them

traverse Buckinghamshire and Shropshire; let them go into the wild valleys of Cornwall; ay, into the genuine country of almost any part of England, and they will find stone floors and naked tables, and pewter plates, and straw beds, and homely living enough in all conscience. They may see oxen ploughing in the fields with simple, heavy, wooden yokes such as were used five hundred years ago; and horses harnessed with collars of straw, and an old rope or two, not altogether worth half-a-crown, doing the tillage of large farms. They may eat a turnip-pie in one place, and oatmeal cake, or an oatmeal pudding in another, and bless their stars if they see a bit of butcher's meat once a week. Yes, there are primitive living and primitive habits left over vast districts of England yet, which, we trust, under a better view of things, will receive no change, except such as springs from the gradual and sound growth of true knowledge.

But they bring up their sons to be clerks and such "skimmy-dish things" in towns. Ay, there is the rub; and this we owe to the rage for large rentals inspired by the war prices; by false notions of improvement generated during the heyday of farming prosperity; by gentlemen making stewards of lawyers, who have no real knowledge of farming interests, and can, therefore, have no sympathies with the small farmer, or patience with him in the day of his difficulty, and whose only object is to get the greatest rent at the easiest rate. But above all, this we owe to the detestable doctrine of political economy, by which a dozen of moderate farms are swallowed up in one overgrown one,—a desert, from which both small

farmers and labourers were compelled to depart, to make way for machinery, and Irish labourers at fourpence a day. Where were the farmers to put their sons when they were brought up? The small farms, the natural resource for divided capitals and commencements in agricultural life, were, in a great measure, annihilated; and a most useful race of men as far as possible rooted out. Thank God! this abomination and worse than Egyptian plague, is now seen through, and what is better, is *felt*. We shall yet have farms from fifty to a hundred acres, where men of small capitals may try their fortunes, and have a chance of mounting up, instead of being thrust down into the hopeless condition of serfs. We may have humble homesteads, where a father and his sons may work together; where labour may await their days, and an independent fireside their hours of rest. Where a lowly, but a happy people may congregate at Christmas and other festivals, and the old games of blind-man's-buff, turn-trencher, and forfeits, may long be pursued in the evening fire-light of rustic rooms.

The farmer has had his ups and downs. During the war he was too prosperous; since then he has been at times ground to the dust by low prices and high rents. Heaven send him a better day! We would see him as he is, in a healthy state of the country,—a rural king, sowing his corn and reaping his harvest with a glad heart, and amid the rejoicings of a numerous peasantry.

Of the great advance in the science of farming; of the various improved modes of management, and ingenious machines invented for facilitating the farmer's

labours, I have spoken under the head of the country gentleman's pursuits and recreations. One or two other observations on the farmer and his life, may as well be given here.

One of the greatest drawbacks to the pleasantness of their abodes, is to be found in their miry roads and yards, and the stagnant pools and drainages that in the greater number of instances stand somewhere about them. One would think that the latter nuisances were intended by them to neutralize the effects of so much good fresh air as they have; to act as a check, lest they should, surrounded as they are, by every conducive to health and longevity, really live too long. There is scarcely a farm-house but has one of those drain pools, into which all the liquid refuse of their yards runs, and into which dead dogs and cats find their way as a matter of course. In summer, these places are green over, and often stand thick with the bubbles of a pestiferous fermentation; to all which they appear totally insensible, and must be really so, or they would contrive to locate them at a greater distance, or have them carried in a water-cart, and dispersed over their grass lands, where they would be of infinite service.

It is in winter that they are beset by miry roads; and have often yards so deep in dirt that you cannot reach them on foot without getting over the shoes. They and their men stalk to and fro through a six-inch depth of mire as if they trod on a Turkey carpet; but I have often amused myself with imagining what would be the consternation of a cockney, or indeed of any townsman only accustomed to clean roads and good pavements, to find himself set down in the

middle of one of those lanes that lead up to farm-houses, or away into their fields, or even in one of their fold-yards. But to find himself in one of these, as I have done many a time on a dark night, and with a necessity of proceeding,—oh patience! patience; then it is really felt to be a virtue. To slip, and plunge, and flounder on in such a darksome, deep-rutted, slipping and stick-fast road—sometimes the puddle soaking into your shoes, and sometimes sent by the pressure of your tread as from a squirt into your face:—"hic labor, hoc opus est."

A few hours' work now and then with an iron scraper in the yard, and a spade to let off the water in the lanes into the ditches, and the nuisance were prevented. One would have thought that the universal excellence of all the highways now would have made them sensible of the luxury of a good, dry footing, but they seem really quite unaware of it, except you point it out, and then they will tell you in good humour that they have road-menders at work regularly twice a-year—dry weather and frost!

I must here too say a word on the subject of small farms. Political economists, carrying out their theories of the power of capital, and the division of employments, have written many very plausible things in recommendation of large farms. They tell you that the men of capital, who alone can hold large farms, can alone afford to avail themselves of the aid of machinery for accelerating their operations; of expensive manures, such as bones, the ashes of bog-earth, such as are burnt in Berks and Wiltshire; and of new and improved breeds of sheep and cattle; all of which require long purses, that can pay, and wait

for distant returns. These are all excellent reasons for having such men and such farms in the country, by which the march and spirit of improvement may be kept up, and from which, as from reservoirs, may in due course, overflow the advantages they introduce to their less wealthy neighbours at a cheaper rate; but they are no arguments at all against the retention of less farms. It is, in fact, a well-known circumstance, that the speculative and amateur farmers generally farm at a greater expense than their neighbours, an expense, in most cases, never fully made up by the returns, and often really ruinous. That enlightened, systematic views, the division of employments, and a judicious outlay of capital, not always in every man's power, enable large farmers to sell at a lower rate than smaller and poorer farmers, is to a certain degree true, but by no means to the extent supposed. No farm which exceeds the ready and daily survey of the cultivator will be found to produce these advantages. Beyond that extent, there must be overlookers employed, and these must be maintained at a great and probably greater cost than a small farmer lives at on his rented farm; nor can such a system be expected to carry the intentions of the principal into effect with a success like that of his personal surveillance. The small farmer has motives to exertion which do not exist in a troop of hired labourers. Slave labour is notoriously inferior to the labour of freemen, because the freeman has internal motives that the slave never can have; and in the same manner a small farmer who labours on his own rented farm has motives to exertion that the common labourer, who labours for a daily sum, cannot have.

If the small farmer employ any of these, he employs them under the influence of his own eye and example, and thereby communicates a stimulus that is absent on a larger scale of cultivation. The small farmer lives economically; frequently, there is no question, more economically and yet better than the labourer, because he has all his faculties and energies at work to improve his farm and better his condition; circumstances that do not operate on the labourer, who receives just a bare sufficiency in his wage, and sees no possibility, and therefore entertains no hope, of accumulation. The small farmer works hard himself; his children, if he have them, assist him, and his wife too, who also is a manager and a worker. He looks round him, for his eyes are sharpened by his interests, and observes the plans, and measures, and improvements of his wealthier neighbour, adopts what he can of them, and often makes cheap and ingenious substitutes for others. Even if it were a fact, that the large farmer could drive the small farmer out of the country, it would be a circumstance most deeply to be deplored. It would extinguish a class of men of hardy, homely, and independent habits—a serious loss to the nation. It would break those steps out of the ladder of human aspiration, and the improvement of condition, that would have a most fatal influence on all society. An impassable gulph would be placed between the aristocracy of capital and the freedom of labour; which would produce, as its natural results, insolence, effeminacy, and corruption of manners on the one side, and perpetual poverty, hopeless poverty, abjectness of spirit, or sullen and dangerous discontent on the other. Even if, as Miss Martineau, in her interesting stories,

has asserted, it were true that the labourer would be better clothed and fed than the small farmer, would the mere comfort of food and clothes make up, to men living in a free and Christian country, and within the daily reach of its influences, for the destruction of that ascending path which hope alone can travel? There would soon, on such a system, either in agriculture or manufactures, be but two classes in the country,—the great capitalist and the slave. The great capitalist would stand, like Aaron armed with his serpent rod, to eat up all the lesser serpents that attempted to lift their heads above that level which he had condemned them to. The mass would be doomed to a perpetual despair of even advancing one step out of the thraldom of labour and command, and their spirits would die within them, or live only to snatch and destroy what they could not legitimately reach.

But such, happily, is not the case. Circumstances place a limit to such things. The small farmer can and does exist, and has existed, and in many cases, flourished too, in the face of all changes, and surrounded by large farms cultivated with all the skill of modern art, and all the power of capital. I have seen and known such, and happier and more comfortable people do not exist. I do not mean by a small farm, what Miss Martineau has called such,—some dozen acres—mere cottage allotments—but farms of from fifty to a hundred acres. There must be full employment for a pair of horses, or there is created by their keep an undue charge for labour, which is a serious preventive of success. But where there is that full employment, a small farmer may live and prosper.

The political economist generally reasons in straight lines. He will not turn aside to calculate the force of incidental circumstances; and yet, these incidental circumstances frequently alter a question entirely. For instance, a small farm may lie near a large town, and thereby furnish the tenant with a very lucrative trade in milk; and such incidental circumstances, owing to a location favourable for market, and other causes, frequently exist. Small farmers often pay attention to sources of profit nearly, if not altogether, overlooked by larger ones. Who does not know what sums are made by cottagers and small occupiers, of the produce of their gardens and orchards, by carefully looking after it, and some one of the family bringing it to market, and standing with it themselves; while the great farmer seldom looks very narrowly to the growth or preservation of either, and therefore incurs both badness of crop and waste; and if he sends it to market, he sends it to the huckster at a wholesale price, to save the annoyance of standing with it. Small concerns, having small establishments, and *no dignity to support*, nor other cares to divert the attention, find in these sole resources frequently an income itself nearly equal to their expenditure.

To determine questions of this kind there requires a close examination into all their bearings, and into the habits and feelings of those concerned. The truth of the matter, as regards the most profitable size of farms, and their general benefit to the public, seems to be, that there should be some of various sizes, that various degrees of capital and capacity of management may be accommodated; that there may be a chance for those beginning who have little to begin with, and

a chance of the active and enterprising rising, as activity and enterprise should. This seems the only system by which the healthful temperament of a community can be kept up; and that just equilibrium of interests, and that ascending scale of advantages maintained, by which not merely the wealth, but the real happiness of a state is promoted.

CHAPTER III.

FARM-SERVANTS.

The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blessed with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures; now and then
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair.—*Cowper.*

We have in a preceding chapter, taken a view of the English farmer. We have seen him at market—in his fields, and in his house receiving his friends to a holiday feast. If we were to go to the farm-house on any other day, and at any season of the year, and survey the farmer and his men in their daily and ordinary course of life, we should always see something to interest us; and we should have to contemplate a mode of existence forming a strong contrast to that of townsmen; and, notwithstanding the innovation which the progress of modern habits has made on life in the country, still presenting a picture of simplicity, homeliness, and quiet which no other life retains. Thousands, indeed, looking into a farm-house, surveying its furniture, the apparatus and supply of its table, the manners and the language of its inhabitants, would wonder where, after all, was the

vast change said to have taken place in the habits of the agricultural population. O! rude and antiquated enough in all conscience, are hundreds of our farm-houses and their inmates, in many an obscure district of merry England yet. The spots are not difficult to be found even now, where the old oak table, with legs as thick and black as those of an elephant, is spread in the homely house-place, for the farmer and his family—wife, children, servants, male and female; and is heaped with the rude plenty of beans and bacon, beef and cabbage, fried potatoes and bacon, huge puddings with "dip" as it is called, that is, sauce of flour, butter, and water boiled, sharpened with vinegar, or verjuice, and sweetened with brown sugar or more economical molasses—"dip," so called, no doubt, because all formerly dipped their morsel into it; a table where bread and cheese and beer, and good milk porridge and oatmeal porridge, or stir-about, still resist the introduction of tea and coffee and such trash, as the stout old husbandman terms it. Let no one say that modern language and modern habits have driven away the ancient rusticity, while such dialogues between the farmer and guest as the following may be heard—and such may yet be heard in the Peak of Derbyshire, where this really passed.

Farmer at table to his guest.—Ite mon, ite!

Guest.—Au have iten, mon. Au've iten till I'm weelly brussen.

Farmer.—Then ite, and brust thee out mon: au wooden we hadden to brussen thee wee.*

* This is the present genuine dialect of the Peak, and is nearly as pure Saxon. It is curious to see in the southern agricultural counties, how the old Saxon terms are worn out by a greater intercourse with London and towns-people, although the people themselves have

It is no rare sight to see the farmer himself, with his clouted shoon and his fustian coat, ribbed blue or black worsted stockings, and breeches of corduroy; to see him arousing his household, at five o'clock of a morning, and his wife hurrying the servant-wenches, as they call them, from their beds, crying,—"Up, up, boulder-heads!" that is pebble-heads, or heavy-heads, and asking them if they mean to lie till the sun burns their eyes out; having them up to light fires, sweep the hearth, and get to milking, cheese-making, churning, and what not; while he gets his men and boys to their duties,—in winter, to fodder the horses and cows, and prepare for ploughing, or leading out manure; to supply the "young beast,"—young cattle, in the straw-yard with food; to chop turnips, carrots, mangel-wurzel, cut hay, boil potatoes for feeding pigs or bullocks; thrash, winnow, or sack corn. In summer, to be off to the harvest-field. The wife is ready to take a turn at the churn, or to turn up her gown-sleeves to the shoulders, and kneeling down on a straw cushion, to press the sweet curd to the bottom of the

a most Saxon look, with their fair complexions and light brown hair; while, as you proceed northward, the Saxon becomes more and more prevalent in the country dialects. In the midland counties bracken is the common term for fern—in the south not a peasant ever heard it. The dialects of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Staffordshire, are so similar to that of the Sassenach of Scotland, the Lowland Scots, that the language of Burns was nearly as familiar to me when I first read his poems, as that of my village neighbours; and the Scotch read that clever romance of low life, "Bilberry Thurland," with a great relish, the dialogues of which are genuine Nottinghamshire, because they said, it was such good Scotch. I have noticed that the plays of the boys in Derbyshire and in the Scotch Lowlands have similar names, differing from the English names in general; as the English game of bandy, in Derbyshire is shinny, in Scotland shinty.

cheese-pan. To boil the whey for making whey-butter, to press the curd into the cheese-vats; place the new cheese in the press; to salt and turn, and look after those cheeses which are in the different stages of the progress, from perfect newness and white softness, to their investment with the unctuous coating of a goodly age. He is ready to go with the men into the farm; she is ready to see that the calves are properly fed, and to bargain with the butcher for the fat ones; to feed her geese, turkeys, guinea-fowls, and barn-door fowls; to see after the collection of eggs; how the milk is going on in the dairy, the cream churning, and moulding of butter for sale. In some counties, especially in the west of England, numerous are those homely and most useful dames that you see mounted on their horses with nothing but a flat pad, or a stuffed sack under them, jogging to market to dispose of the products of their dairy and poultry yard, as fresh, hale and independent as their grandmothers were. As to the farmer himself, he can hold the plough as his father did before him. He hates your newfangled notions; he despises your fine-fingered chaps, that are brought up at boarding-schools till they are fit for nothing but to ride on smart, whisk-tailed nags to market, and carry a bit of a sample-bag in their pockets; and had rather, ten times, be off to the hunt, or the race-course than to market at all; or to be running after a dog and gun, breaking down fences, and trampling over turnip and potato crops, when they ought to be watching that other idlers did not commit such depredations. He sits with his men, and works with his men; and, while he does as much as the best of them —follows the plough, the harrow, or the drill, empties

the manure-cart on his fallows, loads the hay or the corn-wagon,—he many a time says to himself that the "master's eye does still more than his hand." The celebrated Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, who was fond of farming, gives in a letter to a friend, a most striking view of the perpetual recurrence of the little occupations which present themselves to the practical farmer, and however apparently trivial, are really important, and full of pleasure to those whose hearts are in such pursuits.—"Rose at three o'clock; crawled into the library, and met one who said,—'work while ye have the light; the night cometh, when no man can work: my father worketh hitherto, and I work.' Rang the great bell, and roused the girls to milking, went up to the farm, roused the horse-keeper, fed the horses while he was getting up; called the boy to suckle the calves, and clean out the cow-house; lighted the pipe, walked round the garden to see what was wanted there; went up to the paddock, to see if the weaning calves were well; went down to the ferry to see if the boy had scooped and cleaned the boat; returned to the farm, examined the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff and corn of eight horses going to plough, mended the acre-staff, cut some thongs, whip-corded the plough-boys' whips, pumped the troughs full, saw the hogs fed, examined the swill-tubs, and then the cellar; ordered a quarter of malt, for the hogs want grains, and the men want beer; filled the pipe again, returned to the river, and bought a lighter of turf for dairy fires, and another of sedge for ovens; hunted out the wheel-barrows, and set them a trundling; returned to the farm, called the men to breakfast, and cut the boys' bread and cheese, and saw the wooden

bottles filled; sent one plough to the three roods, another to the three half-acres, and so on; shut the gates, and the clock struck five; breakfasted; set two men to ditch the five roods, two men to chop sods, and spread about the land, two more to throw up manure in the yard, and three men and six women to weed wheat; set on the carpenter to repair cow cribs, and set them up till winter; the wheeler, to mend the old carts, cart-ladders, rakes, etc., preparatory to hay-time and harvest; walked to the six-acres, found hogs in the grass, went back, and set a man to hedge and thorn; sold the butcher a fat calf, and the suckler a lean one. —The clock strikes nine;—walked into the barley-field; barleys fine—picked off a few tiles and stones, and cut a few thistles;—the peas fine, but foul; the charlock must be topped; the tares doubtful, the fly seems to have taken them; prayed for rain, but could not see a cloud; came round to the wheat-field, wheats rather thin, but the finest colour in the world; sent four women on to the shortest wheats; ordered one man to weed along the ridge of the long wheats, and two women to keep rank and file with him in the furrows; thistles many, blue-bottles no end; traversed all the wheat-field, came to the fallow field; the ditchers have run crooked, set them straight; the flag-sods cut too much, the rush sods too little, strength wasted, shew the men how to three-corner them; laid out more work for the ditchers, went to the ploughs, set the foot a little higher, cut a wedge, set the coulter deeper, must go and get a new mould-board against tomorrow; went to the other plough, gathered up some wood and tied over the traces, mended a horse-tree, tied a thong to the plough-hammer, went to see which lands wanted

ploughing first, sat down under a bush, wondered how any man could be so silly as to call me *reverend;* read two verses in the Bible of the lovingkindness of the Lord in the midst of his temple, hummed a tune of thankfulness, rose up, whistled, the dogs wagged their tails, and away we went, dined, drunk some milk and fell asleep, woke by the carpenter for some slats which the sawyers must cut. Etc. etc."

So spends many a farmer of the old stamp his day, and at night he takes his seat on the settle, under the old wide chimney—his wife has her little work-table set near—the "wenches" darning their stockings, or making up a cap for Sunday, and the men sitting on the other side of the hearth, with their shoes off. He now enjoys of all things, to talk over his labours and plans with the men,—they canvass the best method of doing this and that—lay out the course of to-morrow—what land is to be broke up, or laid down; where barley, wheat, oats, etc. shall be sown, or if they be growing, when they shall be cut. In harvest-time, lambing-time, in potato setting and gathering time, in fact, almost all summer long, there is no sitting on the hearth—it is out of bed with the sun, and after the long hard day—supper, and to bed again. It is only in winter that there is any sitting by the fire, which is seldom diversified further than by the coming in of a neighbouring farmer or the reading of the weekly news.

Such is the rustic, plodding life of many a farmer in England, and there is no part of the population for which so little has been done, and of which so little is thought, as of their farm-servants. Scarcely any of those got any education before the establishment of Sunday schools—how few of them do yet,

compared with the working population of towns? The girls help their mothers—the labourers' wives—in their cottages, as soon almost as they can waddle about. They are scarcely more than infants themselves, when they are set to take care of other infants. The little creatures go lugging about great, fat babies that really seem as heavy as themselves. You may see them on the commons, or little open green spots in the lanes near their homes, congregating together, two or three juvenile nurses, with their charges, carrying them along, or letting them roll on the sward, while they try to catch a few minutes of play with one another, or with that tribe of bairns at their heels—too old to need nursing, and too young to begin nursing others. As they get bigger they are found useful in the house—they mop and brush, and feed the pig, and run to the town for things; and as soon as they get to ten or twelve, out they go to nurse at the farm-houses; a little older, they "go to service;" there they soon aspire to be dairy-maids, or house-maids, whose ambition does not prompt them to seek places in the towns,—and so they go on scrubbing and scouring, and lending a hand in the harvest-field, till they are married to some young fellow, who takes a cottage and sets up day-labourer. This is their life; and the men's is just similar. As soon as they can run about, they are set to watch a gate that stands at the end of the lane or the common to stop cattle from straying, and there through long solitary days they pick up a few halfpence by opening it for travellers. They are sent to scare birds from corn just sown, or just ripening, where

They stroll the lonely Crusoes of the fields—

as Bloomfield has beautifully described them from his own experience. They help to glean, to gather potatoes, to pop beans into holes in dibbling time, to pick hops, to gather up apples for the cider-mill, to gather mushrooms and blackberries for market, to herd flocks of geese, or young turkeys, or lambs at weaning time; they even help to drive sheep to market, or to the wash at shearing time; they can go to the town with a huge pair of clouted ancle-boots to be mended, as you may see them trudging along over the moors, or along the foot-path of the fields, with the strings of the boots tied together, and slung over the shoulder—one boot behind and the other before; and then, they are very useful to lift and carry about the farm-yard, to shred turnips, or beet-root—to hold a sack open—to bring in wood for the fire, or to rear turfs for drying on the moors, as the man cuts them with his paring shovel, or to rear peat-bricks for drying. They are mighty useful animals in their day and generation, and as they get bigger, they successively learn to drive plough, and then to hold it; to drive the team, and finally to do all the labours of a man. That is the growing up of a farm-servant. All this time he is learning his business, but he is learning nothing else,—he is growing up into a tall, long, smock-frocked, straw-hatted, ancle-booted fellow, with a gait as graceful as one of his own plough-bullocks. He has grown up, and gone to service; and there he is, as simple, as ignorant, and as laborious a creature as one of the wagon-horses that he drives. The mechanic sees his weekly newspaper over his pipe and pot; but the clod-hopper, the chopstick, the hawbuck, the hind, the Johnny-raw, or by whatever name,

in whatever district he may be called, is every where the same,—he sees no newspaper, and if he did, he could not read it; and if he hears his master reading it, ten to one but he drops asleep over it. In fact, he has no interest in it. He knows there is such a place as the next town, for he goes there to statutes, and to the fair,—and he has heard of Lunnon, and the French, and Buonaparte, and of late years of America, and he has some dreamy notion that he should like to go there if he could raise the wind, and thought he could find the way—and that is all that he knows of the globe and its concerns, beyond his own fields. The mechanic has his library,—and he reads, and finds that he has a mind, and a hundred tastes and pleasures that he never dreamed of before — the clod-hopper has no library, and if he had, books in his present state would be to him only so many things set on end upon shelves. He is as much of an animal as air and exercise, strong living and sound sleeping can make him, and he is nothing more. Just see the daily course of his life. Harvest-time is the jubilee of his year. It is a time of incessant and hurrying occupation—but that is a benefit to him—it is an excitement, and he wants exciting. It rouses him out of that beclouded and unimaginative dreamy state in which he stalks along the solitary fields, or wields the flail in the barn; digs the drain or the ditch, or plashes the fence, from day to day and week to week. The energies that he has, and they are chiefly physical, are all called forth. He is in a bustle. The weather is fine and warm—his blood flows quicker. The gates are thrown open—the hay rustles in the meadow, or the golden corn

stands in shock amid the stubble:—the wagons are rattling along the lanes and the fields. His neighbours are all called out to assist. The labourers leave everything else, and are all in the harvest-field. The women leave their cottages, and are there too. Young, middle-aged, and old,—all are there—to work or to glean. The comely maiden with her rosy face, her beaming eyes, and fair figure, brings with her mirth and joke. The stout village matrons have each drawn a pair of footless stockings on her arms to protect them from the sun and stubble—they have pinned up their bed-gowns behind, or doffed themselves to the brown stays and linsey-woolsey petticoat, and are amongst the best hands in the field. Even the old are feebly pulling at a rake, or putting hay into wain-row, or looking on, and telling what they have done in their time. The beer-keg is in the field, and the horn often goes round. The lunch is eaten under the tree, or amongst the sheaves. In the house at noon, there is a great setting out of dinner;—beans and bacon, huge puddings and dumplings are plentiful,—it is a joyous and a stirring time. There is no other season of the year in which the farm-servant enjoys himself so much as in harvest; not even in his few other days of relaxation—on his visit to the fair—to the statutes—to the ploughing match, or on *Mothering* Sunday, when all the "servant-lads" and "servant wenches" are, in some parts of the country, set at liberty for a day, to go and see their mothers. See him at any other time, and what a plodding, simple, monotonous life he leads! He rises at an early hour—we have seen in this chapter at *what an hour* the Rev. Mr. Robinson had his men

up;—if he be going to work in the farm-yard, he goes out and gets to it till breakfast-time: but if he be going to plough, or to do work at a distance, or to carry corn home that has been sold at market by his master, or to fetch bones, rape-dust, or other manure from the town, or coals from the pit, he is up whether it be summer or winter, at at hour at which townspeople are often not gone to bed. In early spring and autumn he gets up to plough at five and six o'clock in a morning. It is pitch dark, and dismally cold. He strikes a light with his tinder, for lucifers he never saw, and has only heard of, as a horrible invention for setting ricks on fire. He slips on his ancle-boots without lacing them, and out he goes to fodder his horses, and rub them down. That done, he comes in again.

The "servant wench" has lit the fire and set out his breakfast for him and his fellows,—huge basins of milk porridge, and loaves as big as bee-hives, and pretty much of the same shape, and as brown as the back of their own hands. To this fare he betakes himself with a capacity that only country air and hard labour can give. Having made havoc with as much of these as would serve a round family of citizens to breakfast, he then stretches out his hand to a capacious dish of cold fat bacon of about six inches thick—nay, I once saw bacon on such a table actually ten inches thick, and all one solid mass of fat. This is set on the top of half a peck of cold boiled beans that were left the day before, and however strange such viands might seem to a townsman at six o' clock or earlier, in a morning, they vanish as rapidly as if they did not follow that mess of porridge, and those

huge hunches of bread. Well, to a certainty he has now done. Nay, don't be in such haste—he has *not* done; he has his eye on the great brown loaf again. He must have a snack of bread and cheese; so he takes his knife out of his waistcoat pocket—a gigantic clasp-knife, assuredly made by the knowing Sheffielder to hew down such loaves, and lie in such pockets, and fill such stomachs, and for no other earthly purpose. See! he cuts a massy fragment of the rich curly kissing-crust, that hangs like a fretted cornice from the upper half of the loaf, and places it between the thumb and two fore-fingers of his left hand—he cuts a corresponding piece of cheese, and places it between the little finger and the thick of his hand, and alternately cutting his bread and cheese with his clasp-knife, (for he would not use another for that purpose on any account), as Betty sets a mug of ale before him, he wipes his mouth and says, as he lifts the mug, to his younger companion, who has all this time been faithfully and valiantly imitating him,—"Well, Jack, we must be off, lad,—take a draught, then get the horses out, and I'll be with thee."

This is pretty well for five or six o'clock in a morning; but it is quite as likely that it is only one or two in the morning, as it certainly is, if he be going to a distance with a load, or for a load of anything. The breakfast is as liberally handled, and Betty mean-time has put up their "luncheons" or "ten-o'clocks"—huge masses of bread and cheese, or cold bacon, or cold meat, and a bottle of ale if they are going to plough. Having now breakfasted, he has only to lace his boots, which he generally does in the most inconvenient posture, and not before he has

filled himself till it is tenfold additionally inconvenient —so with a face into which all the blood in his body seems to rush, and with many a grunt, he accomplishes his task, and away he goes;—his whip cracks, his gears jingle, his wagon rumbles, and he is gone. If, however, he be going to plough, he will duly about eleven o'clock lunch under a tree, while his horses rest and eat their hay; and then, at three or four o'clock, he will loose them from the plough, and return home to a dinner as plentiful as his breakfast; his horses are fed, and he goes to bed. If he be going out with corn, or for coals, he is off, as I have said, probably by two o'clock, and in his wagon he duly takes with him a truss of hay and a truss of straw. The hay is for his horses to eat at some way-side public-house, and the straw is for payment for their standing in the stable. The straw is worth a shilling, and in some places, at certain seasons, eighteen-pence. If he does not take straw, he takes a shilling in money. He carries his lunch and eats it in the ale-house, and he has a shilling for himself and companion to drink, and treat the hostler. This is a custom as old as farms and corn-mills themselves. If it be winter weather, you shall meet him, probably, with straw-bands wrapped round his legs, or even round his hat for warmth; and in heavy rain his Macintosh is a sack-bag, which he throws over his shoulders, and goes on defying the weather for a whole day. In sudden squalls and thunder showers in summer, you may see him, and frequently a whole cluster of harvesters, take shelter under his wagon till the storm is over. By the evening fire, in some farm-houses, they mend their shoes, or shape and polish the heads of flails

which they have cut from the black-thorn bush, and have had in a loft or under their bed seasoning for the last six months, or they get into some horse-play, or they doze

> Till chilblains wake them, or the snapping fire.

And on Sundays they go to church in the morning to get a quiet nod. Perhaps it is to them that the apostle alludes when he says—"And your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." For the only chance of their worship seems to be in their dreams—the daily exposure to the air on the six days making them as drowsy as bats on the seventh. In the afternoon they lean over gates, or play at quoits:—and there is the life of a farmer man-servant, till he is metamorphosed into a labourer by marrying and setting up his cottage, finding himself, and receiving weekly instead of yearly wages. Such is the farm-servant, whether you see him in his white, his blue, his tawny, or his olive-green smock-frock, in his straw-hat, or his wide-awake, according to the prevailing fashion of different parts of the country—and truly, seeing him and his fellows, we may ask with Wordsworth—

> What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand,
> What penetrating power of sun or breeze
> Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
> Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
> This torpor is no pitiable work
> Of modern ingenuity: no town
> Or crowded city may be taxed with aught
> Of sottish vice, or desperate breach of law,
> To which in after years he may be roused.
> This boy the fields produce:—his spade and hoe—
> The carter's whip that on his shoulder rests,
> In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,

The sceptre of his sway: his country's name,
Her equal rights, her churches and her schools—
What have they done for him? And, let me ask,
For tens of thousands, uninformed as he? *

* Who would believe it, that such is the profound ignorance amongst the peasantry even of the Cumberland hills—amongst that peasantry where Wordsworth himself has found his Michaels, his Matthews, and many another man and woman that in his hands have become classical and enduring specimens of rustic heart and mind, that such facts as the following could occur, and yet this did occur there not very long ago. The "statesmen," that is, small proprietors there, are a people very little susceptible of religious excitement; and we may believe, have in past years, been very much neglected by their natural instructors. You hear of no "revivals" amongst them, and the Methodists have little success amongst them. Some person, speaking with the wife of one of these "statesmen" on religious subjects, found that she had not even heard of such a person as Jesus Christ! Astonished at the discovery, he began to tell her of his history; of his coming to save the world, and of his being put to death. Having listened to all this very attentively, she inquired where this occurred; and that being answered, she asked, "and when was it?" this being also told her, she very gravely observed—"Well, its sae far off, and sae lang since, we 'll fain believe that it isna true!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE BONDAGE SYSTEM OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND.

A person from the south or midland counties of England journeying northward, is struck when he enters Durham, or Northumberland, with the sight of bands of women working in the fields under the surveillance of one man. One or two such bands, of from half a dozen to a dozen women, generally young, might be passed over; but when they recur again and again, and you observe them wherever you go, they become a marked feature of the agricultural system of the country, and you naturally inquire how it is, that such regular bands of female labourers prevail there. The answer, in the provincial tongue, is—"O they are the Bone-ditches," *i. e.* Bondages. Bondages! that is an odd sound, you think, in England. What have we bondage, a rural serfdom, still existing in free and fair England? Even so. The thing is astounding enough, but it is a fact. As I cast my eyes for the first time on these female bands in the fields, working under their drivers, I was, before making any inquiry respecting them, irresistibly reminded of the slave-gangs of the West Indies: turnip-hoeing, somehow, associated itself strangely in my brain with

sugar-cane dressing; but when I heard these women called Bondages, the association became tenfold strong.

On all the large estates in these counties, and in the south of Scotland, the bondage system prevails. No married labourer is permitted to dwell on these estates unless he enters into bond to comply with this system. These labourers are termed hinds. Small houses are built for them on the farms, and on some of the estates —as those of the Duke of Northumberland—all these cottages are numbered, and the number is painted on the door. A hind, therefore, engaging to work on one of the farms belonging to the estate, has a house assigned him. He has 4*l.* a year in money; the keep of a cow; his fuel found him; a prescribed quantity of coal, wood, or peat to each cottage; he is allowed to plant a certain quantity of land with potatoes; and has thirteen boles of corn furnished him for his family consumption; one-third being oats, one-third barley, and one-third peas. In return for these advantages, he is bound to give his labour the year round, and also to furnish a woman labourer at 1*s.* per day, during harvest, and 8*d.* per day for the rest of the year. Now it appears, at once, that this is no hereditary serfdom—such a thing could not exist in this country; but it is the next thing to it, and no doubt has descended from it; being serfdom in its mitigated form, in which alone modern notions and feelings would tolerate it. It may even be said that it is a voluntary system; that it is merely married hinds doing that which unmarried farm servants do everywhere else—hire themselves on certain conditions from year to year. The great question is, whether these conditions are just, and favourable to the social

and moral improvement of the labouring class. Whether, indeed, it be quite of so voluntary a nature as, at first sight, appears; whether it be favourable to the onward movement of the community in knowledge, virtue, and active and enterprising habits. These are questions which concern the public; and these I shall endeavour to answer in that candid and dispassionate spirit which public good requires.

In the first place, then, it is only just to say that their cottages, though they vary a good deal on different estates, are in themselves, in some cases, not bad. Indeed, some of those which we entered on the estates of the Duke of Northumberland, were much more comfortable than labourers' cottages often are. Each has its number painted on the door, within a crescent,—the crest of the Northumberland family; and though this has a look rather savouring too much of a badge of servitude, yet within, many of them are very comfortable. They are all built pretty much on one principle, and that very different to the labourers' houses of the south. They are copied, in fact, from the Scotch cottages. They are of one story, and generally of one room. On one side, is the fire-place, with an oven on one hand, and a boiler on the other; on the opposite side of the cottage, is the great partition for the beds, which are two in number, with sliding doors or curtains. The ceiling is formed by poles nailed across from one side of the roof to the other, about half a yard above where it begins to slope, and covered with matting. From the matting to the wall, the slope is covered with a piece of chintz in the best cottages; in others, with some showy calico print, with ordinary wall-

paper, or even with paper daubed with various colours and patterns. This is the regular style of the hind's cottage; varying in neatness and comfort, it must be confessed, however, from one another by many degrees. Many are very naked, dirty, and squalid. Where they happen to stand separate, on open heaths, and in glens of the hills, nature throws around them so much of wild freedom and picturesqueness as makes them very agreeable. The cottages of the shepherds are often very snug and curious. We went into the cottage of the herd of Middleton, at the foot of the Cheviots, an estate formerly belonging to Greenwich Hospital. This hut was of more than ordinary size, as it was required to accommodate several shepherds. The part of the house on your left as you entered was divided into two rooms. The one was a sort of entrance lobby, where stood the cheese-press, and the pails, and where hung up various shepherds' plaids, great coats, and strong shoes. In one place hung a mass of little caps with strings to them, ready to tie upon the sheeps' heads when they became galled by the fly in summer; in another were suspended wool-shears, and crooks. The other little room was the dairy, with the oddest assemblage of wooden quaighs or little pails imaginable. Over these rooms, a step-ladder led to an open attic in the roof, which formed at once the sleeping apartment of the shepherds, and a store-room. Here were three or four beds, some of them woollen mattresses on rude stump bedsteads; others pieces of wicker-work, like the lower half of a pot-crate cut off, about half a yard high, filled with straw, and a few blankets laid upon it. There were lots of

fleeces of wool stowed away; and lasts and awls stuck into the spars, shewed that the herds occasionally amused their leisure in winter and bad weather by cobbling their shoes. The half of the house on your right hand on entering, was at all points such as I have before described, with its coved and matted ceiling, its chintz cornice, and its two beds with sliding doors. But the bulk of the cottages of the hinds about the great farm-houses, are dismal abodes. They are generally built in a low, and sometimes in a dreary quadrangle, without those additions of gardens, piggeries, etc., which so much enrich and embellish the cottages of the labourers in many parts of the kingdom. And what is the state of feeling within? is it that of contentment or acquiescence? I am bound to say that many inquiries made in various places, discovered one general sentiment of discontent with the system. But in the first place, let us take a view of the general aspect of the country under this system as it appears to a stranger from the south, and here we have at hand the graphic descriptions of Cobbett, from his tour in Scotland and the northern counties of England, in 1832.

He does not seem to have become aware of the existence of the system while in Durham and Northumberland. He perceived, what no man can pass through those counties without seeing, the large-farm system in full operation, and with all its consequences in its face. "From Morpeth to within four miles of Hexham the land is very indifferent; the farms of an enormous extent. I saw in one place more than a hundred corn stacks in one yard, each having from six to seven Surrey wagon-loads of sheaves in one stack;

and not another house to be seen within a mile or two of the farm-house. There appears to be no such thing as barns, but merely a place to take in a stack at a time, and thrash it out by a machine. The country seems to be almost wholly destitute of people: immense tracts of corn land, but neither cottages nor churches." p. 56. This was the first glimpse of the thing; it had not yet broken fully upon him; but he had not gone much further before the vast solitude of the depopulative system began to press upon his brain, and to set those indignant feelings and theorizings at work in him, which belonged so peculiarly to his nature. "From Morpeth to Alnwick, the country, generally speaking, is very poor as to land, scarcely any trees at all; the farms enormously extensive: only two churches, I think, in the whole of the twenty miles, i. e. from Newcastle to Alnwick. Scarcely anything worthy the name of a tree, and not one single dwelling having the appearance of a labourer's house. Here appears to be neither hedging nor ditching; no such thing as a sheep-fold or a hurdle to be seen; the cattle and sheep very few in number; *the farm-servants living in the farm-houses, and very few of them;* the thrashing done by machinery and horses; *a country without people.* This is a pretty country to take a minister from, to govern the south of England! a pretty country to take a Lord Chancellor from, to prattle about *poor-laws*, and about *surplus population!* My Lord Grey, has, in fact, spent his life here, and Brougham has spent his life in the inns of court, or in the botheration of speculative books. How should either of them know anything about the eastern, southern, or western coun-

ties? I wish I had my dignitary, DR. BLACK, here; I would soon make him see that he has all these number of years been talking about the bull's horns instead of his tail and buttocks. Besides the indescribable pleasure of having seen NEWCASTLE, the SHIELDSES, SUNDERLAND, DURHAM, and HEXHAM, I have now discovered the true ground of all the errors of the Scotch *feelosophers*, with regard to population, and with regard to poor-laws. The two countries are as different as any things of the same nature can possibly be; that which applies to the one does not at all apply to the other. The agricultural counties are covered all over with parish churches, and with people thinly distributed here and there. Only look at the two counties of Dorset and Durham. Dorset contains 1005 square miles; Durham contains 1061 square miles. Dorset has 271 *parishes;* Durham has 75 parishes. The population of Dorset is scattered all over the whole of the county; there being no town of any magnitude in it. The population of Durham, though larger than that of Dorset, is almost all gathered together at the mouths of the TYNE, the WEAR, and the TEES. Northumberland has 1871 square miles; and Suffolk has 1512 square miles. Northumberland has *eighty-eight parishes;* and Suffolk has *five hundred and ten parishes.* So here is a country one-third part smaller than that of Northumberland, with *six times as many villages in it!* What comparison is there to be made between states of society so essentially different? What rule is there, with regard to population and poor-laws, which can apply to both cases? * * * * Blind and thoughtless must that man be, who imagines that all

but *farms* in the south are unproductive. I much question whether, taking a strip three miles each way from the road, coming from NEWCASTLE to ALNWICK, an equal quantity of what is called *waste ground* in Surrey, together with the cottages that skirt it, do not exceed such strip of ground in point of produce. Yes, the cows, pigs, geese, poultry, gardens, bees, and fuel that arise from these *wastes*, far exceed, even in the capacity of sustaining people, similar breadths of ground, distributed into these large farms, in the poorer parts of Northumberland. I have seen not lest than ten thousand geese in one tract of common, in about six miles, going from CHOBHAM towards FARNHAM in Surrey. I believe these geese alone, raised entirely by care and the common, to be worth more than the clear profit that can be drawn from any similar breadth of land between MORPETH and ALNWICK."

There are two important particulars connected with this statement: one regards the sustenance of life, and the other morals. Much has been said of the morals of the hinds of Northumberland under this system, and in the main their morals may be good; but one or two facts I can state, as it regards the morals of the common people in general in both counties. In going over this very ground, of which Cobbett has been speaking, we witnessed such a scene as we never witnessed in any other part of England. We had taken our places in an afternoon coach, going from Newcastle to Morpeth. It was market-day, and we had not proceeded far out of Newcastle when we found that the coach in which we were, had actually *two-and-thirty passengers*. They

consisted of country-people, returning from market, who were taken up principally on the road. There were *nine* inside, and *twenty-three* outside ; *six of whom sat piled on each other's knees, on the driving-box !* The greater part of them were drunk; and the number of tipsy fellows staggering along the road, exceeded what we ever saw in any other quarter. We happened to be too at Alnwick fair, and we never saw the farmers and drovers more freely indulge in drink and noise. Moreover, from Alnwick to Belford we had a wealthy farmer in the coach, who was raving drunk, shouted out of the windows, chafed like a wild-beast in a cage, and presented a spectacle such as I have never seen in a coach elsewhere. So much for the morals of that region. We are now living amongst the very scenes Cobbett alludes to in Surrey, and we never saw a country more abounding with peasantry, who are ignorant from neglect it is true, but appear neither unusually sottish nor disorderly. And as to the sustenance of life, nothing so much surprised us on settling here, as the quantity of open lands extending in all directions, though only fourteen miles from London; and the number of cottages everywhere skirting them, with their walls covered with vines, and gardens and orchards which half bury them in abundance. The quantities of pigs, geese, ponies, and cattle reared on the greens and wastes are immense.

But Cobbett had not yet seen the finest lands, or got a glimpse of the Bondage System. He still goes on expressing his astonishment at the solitude, the vast farms with their steam thrashing-machines, "so that the elements seem to be pressed into the

amiable service of sweeping the people from the earth, in order that the whole amount may go into the hands of a small number of persons, that they may squander it at London, Paris, or Rome." It was only after he had traversed the Lothians that the full discovery broke upon him; so that after all, he never seems to have perceived that the Bondage system was prevalent in England, but speaks of it as exclusively a Scotch system. There is every reason to believe it a relic of ancient feudalism; but it is certain that but for the doctrines of the Edinburgh Economists it would have long ago vanished from our soil. When Cobbett arrived at Edinburgh, there he seemed to take breath, and clear his lungs for a good tirade against the system; which he does thus, in his first letter to the *Chopsticks* of the south. "This city is fifty-six miles from the Tweed, which separates England from Scotland. I have come through the country in a post-chaise, stopped one night upon the road, and have made every inquiry, in order that I might be able to ascertain the exact state of the labourers on the land. With the exception of about seven miles, the land is the finest that I ever saw in my life, though I have seen every fine vale in every county in England, and in the United States of America. I never saw any land a tenth-part so good. You will know what the land is, when I tell you that it is by no means uncommon for it to produce seven English quarters of wheat upon one English acre; and forty tons of turnips upon one English acre; and that there are, almost in every half mile, from fifty to a hundred acres of turnips in one piece, sometimes white turnips, and sometimes Swedes; all in rows, as straight as a line, and without a weed to be seen in any of these beautiful fields.

"Oh! how you will wish to be here! 'Lord,' you will say to yourselves, 'what pretty villages there must be; what nice churches and churchyards. Oh! and what preciously nice ale-houses! Come, Jack, let us set off to Scotland! What nice gardens we shall have to our cottages there! What beautiful flowers our wives will have, climbing up about the windows, and on both sides of the paths leading from the wicket up to the door! And what prancing and barking pigs we shall have running out upon the common, and what a flock of geese grazing upon the green!'

"Stop! stop! I have not come to listen to you, but to make you listen to me. Let me tell you, then, that there is neither village, nor church, nor ale-house, nor garden, nor cottage, nor flowers, nor pig, nor goose, nor common, nor green; but the thing is thus: 1. The farms of a whole country are, generally speaking, the property of one lord. 2. They are so large, that the corn-stacks frequently amount to more than a hundred upon one farm, each stack having in it, on an average, from fifteen to twenty English quarters of corn. 3. The farmer's house is a house big enough and fine enough for a gentleman to live in; the farm-yard is a square, with buildings on the sides of it for horses, cattle, and implements; the stack-yard is on one side of this, the stacks all in rows, and the place as big as a little town. 4. On the side of the farm-yard next to the stack-yard, there is a place to thrash the corn in; and there is, close by this, always a thrashing-machine, sometimes worked by horses, sometimes by water, sometimes by wind, and sometimes by steam, there being no such thing as a barn or a flail in the whole country.

"'Well,' say you, 'but out of such a quantity of corn, and of beef, and of mutton, there must some come to the share of the chopsticks to be sure!' Don't be too sure yet; but hold your tongue, and hear my story. The single labourers are kept in this manner: about four of them are put into a shed, quite away from the farm-house, and out of the farm-yard; which shed, Dr. Jameson, in his Dictionary, calls a 'boothie,' a place, says he, where labouring servants are lodged. A boothie means a little booth; and here these men live and sleep, having a certain allowance of oat, barley, and pea meal, upon which they live, mixing it with water, or with milk when they are allowed the use of a cow, which they have to milk themselves. They are allowed some little matter of money besides, to buy clothes with, but never dream of being allowed to set foot within the walls of the farm-house. They hire for the year, under very severe punishment in case of misbehaviour, or quitting service; and cannot have fresh service, without a *character* from the *last master*, and also from the *minister of the parish!*

"Pretty well that, for a knife and fork chopstick of Sussex, who has been used to sit round the fire with the master and mistress, and pull about and tickle the laughing maids! Pretty well *that!* But it is the life of the married labourer that will delight you. Upon a steam-engine farm, there are perhaps eight or ten of these. There is, at a considerable distance from the farm-yard, a sort of *barrack* erected for these to live in. It is a long shed, stone walls and pantile roof, and divided into a certain number of *boothies*, each having a door and one little window, all

the doors being on one side of the shed, and there being no *back-doors;* no such thing, for them, appears ever to be thought of. The ground in front of the shed is wide or narrow according to circumstances, but quite smooth; merely a place to walk upon. Each distinct *boothie* is about seventeen feet one way, and fifteen feet the other way, as nearly as my eye could determine. There is no ceiling, and no floor but the earth. In this place, a man and his wife and family have to live. When they go into it, there is nothing but the four bare walls, and the tiles over their head, and a small fire-place. To make the most of the room, they at their own cost erect *berths,* like those in a barrack-room, which they get up into when they go to bed; and here they are, a man, and his wife, and a parcel of children, squeezed up in this miserable hole, with their meal and their washing tackle, and all their other things; and yet it is quite surprising how decent the women endeavour to keep the place. These women, for I found all the men out at work, appeared to be most industrious creatures, to be extremely obliging, and of good disposition; and the shame is, that they are permitted to enjoy so small a portion of the fruit of all their labours, of all their cares.

"But if their dwelling-places be bad, their food is worse, being fed upon exactly that which we feed hogs and horses upon. The married man receives in money about four pounds for the whole year: and he has besides sixty bushels of oats, thirty bushels of barley, twelve bushels of peas, and three bushels of potatoes, with ground allowed him to plant the potatoes. The

master gives him the keep of a cow the year round; but he must find the cow himself; he pays for his own fuel; he must find a woman to reap for twenty whole days in the harvest, as payment for the rent of his boothie. He has no wheat,—the meal altogether amounts to about six pounds for every day in the year; the oat-meal is eaten in porridge; the barley-meal and pea-meal are mixed together, and baked into a sort of cakes, upon an iron plate put over the fire; they sometimes get a pig, and feed it upon the potatoes.

"Thus they never have one bit of wheaten bread, or of wheaten flour, nor of beef nor mutton, though the land is covered with wheat and with cattle. The hiring is for a year, beginning on the 26th of May, and not at Michaelmas. The farmer takes the man, just at the season to get the sweat out of him; and if he dies, he dies when the main work is done. The labourer is wholly at the mercy of the master, who, if he will not keep him beyond the year, can totally ruin him, by refusing him a character. The cow is a thing more in name than reality; she may be about to calve when the 26th of May comes: the wife may be in such a situation as to make removal perilous to her life. This family has *no home;* and no home can any man be said to have, who can thus be dislodged every year of his life at the will of his master. It frequently happens, that the poor creatures are compelled to sell their cow for next to nothing; and indeed the *necessity of character from the last employer,* makes the man a real slave, worse off than the negro by many degrees; for here there is neither law to ensure him relief, nor motive in the master to attend to his health, or to preserve his life.

"Six days from day-light to dark these good, and laborious, and patient, and kind people labour. On an average they have six English miles to go to church. Here are therefore twelve miles to walk on Sunday; and the consequence is, that they very seldom go. But, say you, what do they do with all the wheat, and all the beef, and all the mutton? and what becomes of all the money that they are sold for? Why, the cattle and sheep walk into England upon their legs; the wheat is put into ships to be sent to London or elsewhere; and as to the money, the farmer is allowed to have a little of it, but almost the whole of it is sent to the landlord, to be gambled, or otherwise squandered away at *London*, at *Paris*, or at *Rome*. The rent of the land is enormous; four, five, six, or seven pounds for an English acre. The farmer is not allowed to get much; almost the whole goes into the pockets of the lords; the labourers are their slaves, and the farmers their slave-drivers. The farm-yards are, in fact, *factories* for making corn and meat, carried on principally by the means of horses and machinery. There are no people; and these men seem to think that people are not necessary to a state. I came over a tract of country a great deal bigger than the county of Suffolk, with only three towns in it, and a couple of villages, while the county of Suffolk has 29 market-towns and 491 villages. Yet our precious government seem to wish to reduce England to the state of this part of Scotland; and you are abused and reproached, and called ignorant, because you will not reside in a *boothie*, and live upon the food which we give to horses and hogs." pp. 102—7.

This is the description of one of the most accurate observers of all that related to the working man that ever lived. Such is the comparison which he draws between the condition of the hinds, and of the southern chopsticks. Such is his opinion of the superior condition of the southern peasantry, that he says he would not be the man who should propose to one of them to adopt the condition of a hind, especially if the fellow should have a bill-hook in his hand. Cobbett's description is as accurate as it is graphic. Let any one compare it with my own in the early part of this paper, made from personal observation this very last summer. Such was the painful impression left upon Cobbett's mind, that he reverts to it again and again. He tells us of a visit made to a farm near Dunfermline; and of the wretched abodes and food of the men he found there; but the last extract contains the substance of the Bondage System.

Let it be understood that the system to the Bondages, so called, is no hardship. They are principally girls from sixteen to twenty years of age. Full of health and spirits, and glad enough to range over the farm fields in a troop, with a stout young fellow, laughing and gossiping,—the grievance is none of theirs; but the poor hind's, who has to maintain them. Just when his family becomes large, and he has need of all his earnings to feed, and clothe, and educate his troop of children, then he is compelled to hire and maintain a woman to eat up his children's food; and to take away in her wages that little pittance of cash that is allowed him, as many a wife with tears in her eyes has said, to clothe the puir bairns and put them to school. But the system is not

without its injurious effect on the Bondage herself. It has been said that the Bondages are of service in the hind's cottage, but the wives over the whole space where the bondage system prevails tell you that the Bondages are of little or no use in the house. They look upon themselves as hired to work on the farm, and they neither are very willing to work in the house, nor very capable. They get out-of-door tastes and habits: they loathe the confinement of the house; they dislike its duties. "They are fit only," say the women, "to mind the bairns a bit about the door." And this is one of the evils of the system. Instead of women brought up to manage a house, to care for children, to make a fireside comfortable, and to manage the domestic resources well, they come to housekeeping ignorant, unprepared, and in a great measure disqualified for it. They can hoe turnips and potatoes to a miracle, but know very little about the most approved methods of cooking them. They can rake hay better than comb children's hair; drive a cart or a harrow with a better grace than rock a cradle, and help more nimbly in the barn than in the ingle.

The two points of most importance are those of the hind's being compelled to have a character from the last master, and of being at his mercy, to turn him not only out of employ, but out of house and home. I think little of their having no wheaten flour. Many a hardy race of peasants, and even farmers, both in Scotland and England, in mountain districts, never see anything in the shape of bread but oat-cake. In Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cumberland, and the Peak of Derbyshire, there are thousands that would not thank you for wheaten bread. The girdle-cakes,

as they call them, which the wives of the hinds make, of mixed barley and pea meal, I frequently ate of and enjoyed. They are about an inch thick, and eight or ten inches in diameter, and taste perceptibly of the pea. These, and milk, are a simple, but not a despicable food; but the fact, that these poor people must bring a character from the last master before they can be employed again, is one which may seem at first sight a reasonable demand, but is in fact the binding link of a most subtle and consummate slavery. I have seen the effect of this system in the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire collieries. There, amongst the master colliers a combination was entered into, and for aught I know still exists, to regulate the price of coal, and the quantity each master should relatively get. This rule, that no man should be employed except he brought a character from his last master was adopted; and what was the consequence? That every man was the bounden slave of him in whose employment he was; and that soon the price of coals was raised to three times their actual value, and the labour of the men restricted to about three half-days, or a day and a half per week.

Let any one imagine a body of men bound by one common interest, holding in their possession all the population of several counties, and subjecting their men to this rule. Can there be a more positive despotism? The hind is at the mercy of the caprice, the anger, or the cupidity of the man in whose hand he is; and if he dismiss him, as I said in the early part of this paper, where is he to go? As Cobbett justly remarks, he has No Home; and nothing but utter and irretrievable ruin is before him. Such a

condition is unfit for any Englishman; such power as that of the master no man ought to hold. A condition like this, must generate a slavish character. Can that noble independence of feeling belong to a hind, which is the boast of the humblest Englishman, while he holds employment, home, character, everything at the utter mercy of another? I have now laid before the reader the combined evidence of my own observation and that of a great observer of the working classes, both in town and country, in the north and the south, and I leave it to the judgment of any man whether such a system is good or bad: but I cannot help picturing to myself what would be the consequence of the spread of this system of large farm and bondage all over England. Let us suppose, as we must in that case, almost all our working population cooped up in large towns in shops and factories, and all the country thrown into large farms to provide them with corn—what an England would it then be! The poetry and the picturesque of rural life would be annihilated; the delicious cottages and gardens, the open common, and the shouting of children would vanish; the scores of sweet old-fashioned hamlets, where an humble sociality and primitive simplicity yet remain, would no more be found; all those charms and amenities of country life, which have inspired poets and patriots with strains and with deeds that have crowned England with half her glory, would have perished; all that series of gradations of rank and character, from the plough-boy and the milk-maid, the free labourer, the yeoman, the small farmer, the substantial farmer, up to the gentleman, would have gone too;

> And a bold peasantry, its country's pride,

would be replaced by a race of stupid and sequacious slaves, tilling the solitary lands of vast land-holders, who must become selfish and hardened in their natures, from the want of all those claims upon their better sympathies which the more varied state of society at present presents. The question therefore does not merely involve the comforts of the hind, but the welfare and character of the country at large; and I think no man who desires England not merely to maintain its noble reputation, but to advance in social wisdom and benevolence, can wish for the wider spread, or even the continuance, of the Bondage System. I think all must unite with me in saying, let the very name perish from the plains of England, where it sounds like a Siberian word. Let labour be free; and this TRUCK SYSTEM of the agriculturists be abolished, not by Act of Parliament, but by public principle and sound policy. It is a system which wrongs all parties. It wrongs the hind, for it robs his children of comfort and knowledge; it wrongs the farmer, for what he saves in labour he pays in rent, while he gains only the character of a task-master; and it wrongs the land-holder, for it puts his petty pecuniary interest into the balance against his honour and integrity; and causes him to be regarded as a tyrant, in hearts where he might be honoured as a natural protector, and revered as a father.

CHAPTER V.

THE TERRORS OF A SOLITARY HOUSE.

The citizen who lives in a compact house in the centre of a great city; whose doors and windows are secured at night by bars, bolts, shutters, locks, and hinges of the most approved and patented construction; who, if he look out of doors, looks upon splendid rows of lamps; upon human habitations all about him; whose house can only be assailed behind by climbing over the tops of other houses; or before, by eluding troops of passengers and watchmen, whom the smallest alarm would hurry to the spot: I say, if such a man could be suddenly set down in one of our many thousand country houses, what a feeling of unprotected solitude would fall upon him. To sit by the fire of many a farm-house, or cottage, and hear

the unopposed wind come sighing and howling about it; to hear the trees swaying and rustling in the gale, infusing a most forlorn sense of the absence of all neighbouring abodes; to look on the simple casements, and the old-fashioned locks and bolts, and to think what would their resistance be to the determined attack of bold thieves;—I imagine it would give many such worthy citizen a new and not very enviable feeling. But if he were to step out before the door of such a house at nine or ten o'clock of a winter or autumnal night, what a state of naked jeopardy it would seem to stand in! Perhaps all solitary darkness;—nothing to be heard but the sound of neighbouring woods; or the roar of distant waters; or the baying of the ban-dogs at the scattered and far-off farm-houses; the wind coming puffing upon him with a wild freshness, as from the face of vast and solitary moors; or perhaps some gleam of moonlight, or the wild, lurid light which hovers in the horizon of a winter-night sky, revealing to him desolate wastes, or gloomy surrounding woods. In truth, there is many a sweet spot that, in summer weather, and by fair daylight, do seem very paradises; of which we exclaim, in passing, "Ay! there could I live and die, and never desire to leave it!" There are thousands of such sweet places which, when night drops down, assume strange horrors, and make us wish for towers and towns, watchmen, walkers of streets, and gaslight. One seems to have no security in any thing. A single house five or six miles from a neighbour. Mercy! why it is the very place for a murder! What would it avail there to cry help! murder! Murder might be perpetrated a dozen times before help could come!

Just one such fancy as that, and what a prison! a trap! does such a place become to a fearful heart. We look on the walls, and think them slight as cardboard; on the roof, and it becomes in our eyes no better than a layer of rushes. If we were attacked here, it were all over! This gimcrack-tenement would be crushed in before the brawny hand of a thief. And to think of out-of-doors! Yes! of that pleasant out-of-doors, which in the day we glorified ourselves in. Those forest tracts of heath, and gorse, and flowering broom, where the trout hid themselves beneath the overhanging banks of the most transparent streams—ugh! they are now the very lurking-places of danger! What admirable concealment for liers-in-wait, are the deep beds of heather. How black do those bushes of broom and gorse look to a suspicious fancy! They are just the very things for lurking assassins to crouch behind. And what is worse, those woods! those woods that come straggling up to the very doors; putting forward a single tree here and there, as advanced guards of picturesque beauty in the glowing summer noon, or in the spring, when their leaves are all delicately new. Beauty! how could we ever think them beautiful, though we saw them stand in their assembled majesty; though they did tower aloft, with their rugged, gashed, and deeply-indented stems, and make a sound as of many waters in their tops, and cast down pleasant shadows on the mossy turf beneath; and though the thrush and the nightingale did sing triumphantly in their thickets. Beautiful! they are horrible! Their blackness of darkness now makes us shudder. Their breezy roar is fearful beyond description. Let day-

light, and summer sunshine come, and make them look as pleasant as they will, we would not have a wood henceforward within a mile of us. Why, up to the walls of your house, under your very windows, may evil eyes now be glaring from behind those sturdy boles:—they seem to have grown there just to suit the purposes of robbery and murder. We look now to the dogs and guns for assistance, but they give us but cold comfort: for the guns only remind us that at this moment the muzzle of one may be at that chink in the shutter, at that hole out of which a knot has dropped, and in another moment we are in eternity! And the dogs!—see, they rise! they set up the bristles on their backs! they growl! they bark! our fears are true! the place is beset!

This may seem rather exaggerated, read by good day-light, or by the fire of a city hearth; but this is the natural spirit of the solitary house. It is that which many a one has felt. It has cured many a one of longing to live in a "sweet sequestered cot;" nay, it is a spirit felt by the naturalized inhabitants of such solitary places. I look upon such places to generate fears and superstitions too, in no ordinary degree. The inhabitants of solitary houses are often most arrant cowards; and for this there are many causes. A sense of exposure to danger, if it be not lost by time, is more likely to generate timidity of disposition than courage. Then, the sound of woods and waters; the mysterious sighings and moanings, and lumberings, that winds and other causes occasion amongst the old walls and decayed roofs, and ill-fastened doors and casements of large, old country houses, have a wonderful influence on the minds of

the ignorant and simple who pass their lives in the solitude of fields; and go to and fro between their homes and the scene of their duties, often through deep and lonesome dells, through deep, o'ershadowed lanes, by night; by the cross-road, and over the dreary moor: all places of no good character. Superstitious legends hang all about such neighbourhoods; and traditions, enough to freeze the blood of the ignorant, taint a dozen spots round every such place. In this field a girl was killed by her jealous, or only too-favoured lover: to the boughs of that old oak, a man was found hanging: in that deep, dark pool, the poor blind fiddler was found drowned: in that old stone-quarry, and under that high cliff, deeds were done that have mingled a blackness with their name. Nay, in one such locality, the head of a woodman was found by some mowers returning in the evening from their work. There it lay, in the green path of a narrow dingle, horrid and blackening in the sun. It was supposed to have been severed from the wretched man's body with his own axe, by a band of poachers, who charged him with being a spy upon them. The body was found cast into a neighbouring marsh.

What lonely country but has these petrifying horrors? And is it wonderful that they have their effect on the simple peasantry? especially as they are the constant topics round the evening fire, along with a thousand haunted-house and church-yard stories; ghosts, and highway-robberies, and

> Horrid stabs in groves forlorn,
> And murders done in caves.—*Hood.*

The very means of defence sometimes become the aggravators of their evils. The dogs and guns have

added to the catalogue of their tales of horror. The dogs, as conscious of their solitary station as their masters, and with true canine instinct, feeling a great charge and responsibility upon them, set up the most clamorous barkings at the least noise in the night, and often seem to take a melancholy pleasure, a whole night through, in uttering such awful and long-spun howls as are seldom heard in more secure and cheerful situations. These are often looked upon as prognostics of family troubles, and occasion great fears. Who has not heard these dismal howlings at old halls, and been witness to the anxiety they occasioned? And, if a branch blown by the wind, do but scrape against a pane, or an unlucky pig get into the garden, the dogs are all barking outrageously, and the family is up, in the certain belief that they are beset with thieves; and it has been no unfrequent circumstance, on retiring to rest again, that loaded pistols have been left about on tables, and the servants on coming down next morning, with that fatal propensity to sport with fire-arms, have playfully menaced, and actually shot one another in their rashness. Such a catastrophe occurred in the family of a relative of mine, on just such an occasion. But truly, the horrors and depredations which formerly were perpetrated in such places, were enough to make a solitary house a terrible sojourn in the night. A single cottage on a great heath; a toll-bar on a wild road, far from a town; a wealthy farm-house in a retired region; an old hall or grange, amongst gloomy woods. These were places in which such outrages were committed in former years as filled the newspapers of the time with continual details of terror; and would furnish volumes of the most dread-

ful stories. It is said that the diminution of highway robberies and stopping of mails, once so frequent, has been in a great measure occasioned by the system of banking and paper-money. Instead of travellers, carrying with them large bags of gold, a letter by post transmits a bill to any amount, which, if intercepted is of no use to the thief, because the fact is immediately notified to the bank, and payment prevented; and notes being numbered, makes it a matter of the highest risk to offer them, lest the public be apprised of the numbers, and the offender be secured. But the wonderful improvement of all our roads since the days of M'Adam, the consequently increased speed of travelling—the increased population and cultivation of the country, all have combined to spoil the trade of the public plunderer. And the press, as in other respects so in this, has added a marvellous influence. Scarcely has a crime of any sort against society been committed, but it raises a hue and cry; handbills and paragraphs in newspapers are flying far and wide, and dexterous must be the offender who escapes. The house of a friend of mine was entered on a Sunday night, and by means of handbills four of the thieves were secured on the Monday, and tried and transported on the Tuesday. But fifty years ago this could not have been done in a country place. The traveller had to wade through mud and deep ruts, along our well-frequented roads; and if assailed, it was impossible to fly. Desperate bands of thieves made nocturnal assaults upon solitary houses; and, long ere a hue and cry could be raised, they had vanished into woods and heaths, or had fled beyond the slow flight of lumbering mails, and newspapers that did not reach their readers

sometimes for a fortnight. Those were the times for fearful tragedies in lonely dwellings, which even yet furnish thrilling themes for winter fire-sides.

There is an account of the attack of the house of Colonel Purcell, which appeared in the newspapers at the time, and was twice reprinted in the Kaliedoscope, a Liverpool literary paper; the last time soon after the gallant Colonel's death, in 1822, which, although it belongs to Ireland, a country whence not volumes, but whole libraries of such recitals might be imported, I shall insert here, because it so well illustrates the sort of horrors to which lonely houses were, in this country, formerly very much exposed; and from which they are not now entirely exempt: and because perhaps no greater instance of manly courage is upon record. A similar one, of female intrepidity, in a young woman who defended a toll-bar, in which she was alone, against a band of thieves, and shot several of them, I recollect seeing some years ago in the newspapers.

EXTRAORDINARY INTREPIDITY OF SIR JOHN PURCELL.

At the Cork Assizes, Maurice Noonan stood indicted for a burglary, and attempting to rob the house of Sir John Purcell, at Highfort, on the night of the 11th of March, 1812.

Sir John Purcell said, that, on the night of the eleventh of March last, after he had retired to bed, he heard some noise outside the window of his parlour. He slept on the ground-floor, in a room immediately adjoining the parlour. There was a door from one room into the other; but this having been found inconvenient, and there being another passage

from the bed-chamber more accommodating, it was nailed up, and some of the furniture of the parlour placed against it. Shortly after Sir John heard the noise in the front of his house, the windows of the parlour were dashed in, and the noise, occasioned by the feet of the robbers in leaping from the windows down upon the floor, appeared to denote a gang not less than fourteen in number, as it struck him. He immediately got out of bed; and the first resolution he took being to make resistance, it was with no small mortification that he reflected upon the unarmed condition in which he was placed, being destitute of a single weapon of the ordinary sort. In this state he spent little time in deliberation, as it almost immediately occurred to him, that, having supped in the bed-chamber on that night, a knife had been left behind by accident, and he instantly proceeded to grope in the dark for this weapon, which happily he found, before the door leading from the parlour into the bed-chamber had been broken. While he stood in calm but resolute expectation that the progress of the robbers would soon lead them to the bed-chamber, he heard the furniture which had been placed against the nailed-up door, expeditiously displaced, and immediately afterwards the door was burst open. The moon shone with great brightness, and when the door was thrown open, the light streaming in through three large windows in the parlour, afforded Sir John a view that might have made an intrepid spirit not a little apprehensive. His bed-room was darkened to excess, in consequence of the shutters of the windows, as well as the curtains being closed; and thus while he stood enveloped in darkness, he saw standing be-

fore him, by the brightness of the moonlight, a body of men well armed; and of those who were in the van of the gang, he observed that a few were blackened. Armed only with this case knife, and aided only by a dauntless heart, he took his station by the side of the door, and in a moment after one of the villains entered from the parlour into the dark room. Instantly upon advancing, Sir John plunged the knife at him, the point of which entered under the right arm, and in a line with the nipple, and so home was the blow sent, that the knife passed into the robber's body, until Sir John's hand stopped its further progress. Upon receiving this thrust, the villain reeled back into the parlour, crying out blasphemously that he was killed; and shortly after another advanced, who was received in a similar manner, and who also staggered back into the parlour crying out that he was wounded. A voice from the outside gave orders to fire into the dark room. Upon which, a man stept forward with a short gun in his hand, which had the butt broke off at the small, and which had a piece of cord tied round the barrel and stock near the swell. As this fellow stood in the act to fire, Sir John had the amazing coolness to look at his intended murderer, and without betraying any audible emotion whatever, which might point out the exact spot which he was standing in, he calmly calculated his own safety from the shot which was preparing for him. He saw that the contents of the piece were likely to pass closely to his breast without menacing him with, at least, any serious wound, and in this state of pain and manly expectation, he stood without flinching until the piece was fired, and its contents harmlessly lodged in the wall.

It was loaded with a brace of bullets and three slugs. As soon as the robber fired, Sir John made a pass at him with the knife, and wounded him in the arm, which he repeated again in a moment with similar effect; and as the others had done, the villain after being wounded, retired, exclaiming that he was wounded. The robbers immediately rushed forward from the parlour into the dark room, and then it was that Sir John's mind recognized the deepest sense of danger, not to be oppressed by it, however, but to surmount it. He thought that all chance of preserving his own life was over; and he resolved to sell that life still dearer to his intended murderers, than even what they had already paid for the attempt to deprive him of it. He did not lose a moment after the villains had entered the room, to act with the determination he had so instantaneously adopted. He struck at the fourth fellow with his knife, and wounded him, and at the same instant he received a blow on the head, and found himself grappled with. He shortened his hold of the knife, and stabbed repeatedly at the fellow with whom he found himself engaged. The floor being slippery with the blood of the wounded men, Sir John and his adversary both fell, and while they were on the ground, Sir John thinking that his thrusts with his knife, though made with all his force, did not seem to produce the decisive effect, which they had in the beginning of the conflict, he examined the point of his weapon with his finger, and found that the blade of it had bent near the point. As he lay struggling on the ground, he endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to straighten the curvature of the knife; but while one hand was em-

ployed in this attempt, he perceived that the grasp of his adversary was losing its constraint and pressure, and in a moment or two after, he found himself released from it; the limbs of the robber were, in fact, by this time unnerved by death. Sir John found that this fellow had a sword in his hand, and this he immediately seized and gave several blows with it, his knife being no longer serviceable. At length the robbers, finding so many of their party had been killed or wounded, employed themselves in removing the bodies; and Sir John took this opportunity of retiring to a place a little apart from the house, where he remained a short time. They dragged their companions into the parlour, and having placed chairs with the backs upwards, by means of these they lifted the bodies out of the windows, and afterwards took them away. When the robbers retired, Sir John returned to the house, and called up a man-servant from his bed, who, during this long and bloody conflict, had not appeared, and had consequently received from his master warm and loud upbraiding for his cowardice. Sir John then placed his daughter-in-law, and grandchild, who were his only inmates, in places of safety, and took such precautions as circumstances pointed out, till the day-light appeared. The next day, the alarm having been given, search was made after the robbers, and Sir John, having gone to the house of the prisoner Noonan, upon searching, he found concealed under his bed, the identical short gun with which one of the robbers had fired at him. Noonan was immediately secured and sent to gaol, and upon being visited by Sir John Purcell, he acknowledged that Sir John "had like to do for him," and

was proceeding to show, until Sir John prevented him, the wounds he had received from the knife in his arm.

An accomplice of the name of John Daniel Sullivan was produced, who deposed to the same effect. The party met at Noonan's house; that they were nine in number, and had arms; that the prisoner was one of the number, and that he carried a small gun. Upon the gun, which was in the court, being produced, with which Sir John had been fired at, the witness said it was that with which the prisoner was armed the night of the attack; that two men were killed, and three dreadfully wounded. The witness stood a long and rigorous examination by Mr. Counsellor O'Connell; but none of the facts seemed to be shaken, though every use was made of the guilty character of the witness. The prisoner made no defence, and Judge Mayne then proceeded to charge the jury, and commended with approbation the bravery and presence of mind displayed throughout a conflict so very unequal and bloody, by Sir John Purcell. The jury, after a few minutes, returned their verdict—guilty.

But it was not only plunder which excited these fearful attacks; party and family feuds were prosecuted in the same savage spirit, even by the light of day. I have heard my wife's mother relate the following incident, which occurred in her own neighbourhood. About sixty-five years ago there lived at Llanelwth Hall, midway between Llandilo and Llandovery, a gentleman of considerable fortune of the name of Powell. He had separated from his wife, by whom he had two daughters,—and his brother,

Captain Bowen, inflamed by the animosity which naturally arises out of such family divisions, and supposed to be instigated by a paramour of the lady's of the name of Williams, engaged, in concert with this Williams, a band of men to accompany him on a pretended smuggling expedition; and having plied them well with promises of ample payment and plenty of liquor—a bottle of brandy and a pair of new shoes for the day—marched up to Powell's house at twelve o'clock at noon, and at the time of Llandilo fair, when the conspirators knew that Powell's servants would be absent. The only persons actually left in the house with him, were an old woman, and a daughter of this very Bowen's. The conspirators advanced to the front door, and entered the hall, where the old woman met them. Her they seized, and bound to the leg of an old massy oak table. Powell, attracted to the hall by the noise, was immediately seized and literally hewn to pieces in the most horrible manner in the presence of the old woman, and of the murderer's own daughter, who alarmed at the entrance of so grim a band, had concealed herself under this table. The girl from that hour lost her senses, and wandered about the country, a confirmed maniac. My informant often saw this girl at her mother's, who was kind to her, and where she often therefore came, having a particular seat by the fire always left for her. In a lucid interval, they once ventured to ask her what she recollected of this shocking event. She said that she believed she had fainted, and on coming to herself, saw her father stand with a hatchet over her uncle in the act to give him another blow, and that she actually saw her

uncle's face hanging over his shoulder. At this point of the recital, the recollection of the horrors of it came upon her so strongly, that she fell into one of her most violent fits of madness, and they never dared to mention the subject afterwards in her presence.

A fall of snow happening while the murderers were in the house, caused them to be tracked and secured, and Bowen and several, if not all, of his accomplices were executed. Williams made his escape, and was afterwards taken as a sailor on board an American vessel during the war, where he was recognised by some of his countrymen. He made, however, a second escape, as is supposed through the connivance of some relenting neighbour, and never was heard of afterwards. My informant well recollects two of these murderers coming to her mother's house at Cyfarthfa, a few days after the perpetration of the outrage, having so long managed to elude their pursuers. They were equipped as travelling tinkers; but they had new knapsacks, and what was more provocative of notice at that moment, very downcast and melancholy aspects. They felt by the looks which the mistress of the house fixed on them, that they were suspected, and immediately hastened away over the hills towards Aberdare, where they were secured the next day.

A fact, related by a minister of the Society of Friends, shews at once the primitive simplicity which still prevails in some retired districts, and the evident power of faith in Providence over the spirit of evil. In one of the thinly peopled dales of that very beautiful, and yet by parts, very bleak and dreary region—the Peak of Derbyshire, stood a single house far

from neighbours. It was inhabited by a farmer and his family, who lived in such a state of isolation, so unmolested by intruders, and unapprehensive of danger, that they were hardly in the habit of fastening their door at night. The farmer, who had a great distance to go to market, was sometimes late before he got back,—late it may be supposed according to their habits: for in such old-fashioned places, where there is nothing to excite and keep alive the attention but their daily labour, the good people when the day's duties are at an end, drop into bed almost before the sun himself; and are all up, and pursuing their several occupations, almost before the sun too. On these occasions, the good woman used to retire to rest at the usual time, and her husband returning found no latch nor bolt to obstruct his entrance. But one time the wife hearing some one come up to the door, and enter the house, supposed it was her husband; but, after the usual time had elapsed, and he did not come to bed, she got up and went down stairs, when her terror and astonishment may be imagined, for she saw a great sturdy fellow in the act of reconnoitring for plunder. At the first view of him, she afterwards said, she felt ready to drop; but being naturally courageous, and of a deeply religious disposition, she immediately recovered sufficient self-possession to avoid any outcry, and to walk with apparent firmness to a chair which stood on one side of the fire-place. The marauder immediately seated himself in another chair which stood opposite, and fixed his eyes upon her with a most savage expression. Her courage was now almost spent; but recollecting herself, she put up an inward prayer to the Almighty for protection,

and threw herself upon his providence. She immediately felt her internal strength revive, and looked steadfastly at the man, who now had drawn from his pocket a large clasp-knife, opened it, and with a murderous expression in his eyes, appeared ready to spring upon her. She however evinced no visible emotion; she said not a word; but continued to pray for deliverance, or resignation; and to look on the fearful man with a calm seriousness. He rose up, looked at her, then at the knife; then wiped it across his hand; then again eagerly glanced at her; when, at once, a sudden damp seemed to fall upon him; his eyes seemed to blench before her still, fixed gaze; he closed his knife, and went out. At a single spring she reached the door; shot the bolt with a convulsive rapidity, and fell senseless on the floor. When she recovered from her swoon, she was filled with the utmost anxiety on account of her husband, lest the villain should meet him by the way. But presently, she heard his well-known step; his well-known voice on finding the door fastened; and let him in with a heart trembling with mingled agitation and thankfulness. Great as had been her faith on this occasion, and great the interposition of Providence, we may be sure that she would not risk the exercise of the one, or tempt the other, by neglecting in future to shoot the bolt of the door; and her husband, at once taught the danger of his house and of his own passage home, made it a rule to leave the market-town at least an hour earlier after the winter markets.

The unwelcome visitant in this anecdote is one of that class of offenders called "sturdy rogues." Of the real "sturdy rogue" the city, amongst all its

numerous varieties of rogues, knows nothing. He forms one of the terrors of the solitary house. They are such places that he haunts, because he there finds opportunities in the absence of the men to frighten and bully the women. If he finds only a single woman left, as is often the case in harvest time, or at fair or market time, when all the family that can leave have left, he then makes the terror of his presence a means of extorting large booty. What can be more fearful than for a single individual, but especially for a woman, at a lonely house, while all the men are absent in the fields, or elsewhere, to see a huge brawny fellow of ill looks come to the door, peering about with a suspicious inquisitiveness, armed with a sturdy staff, followed, perhaps, by a strong sullen bull-dog, professing himself a tinker, a rag-gatherer, a rat-catcher,—anything, under which to hide evil designs? Nothing, truly, can be more appalling, except when, under the garb of a woman, you feel assured that you have a man before you; or a troop of fellows acting the distressed tradesmen, or sailors with nothing on their bodies, perhaps, but a pair of trowsers, and on their heads a handkerchief tied. When such sturdy vagabonds come, and first cringe and beg in a piteous tone, till, having spied out the real nakedness of the place, as to physical strength, they rise in their demands, hint strange things; instead of going away when desired, walk into the house, grow insolent, and at length downright thievish and outrageous,—these are circumstances of peculiar terror not to be exceeded in human experience, and which yet have been often experienced by the dwellers in solitary houses.

I have heard a lady describe her sensations in such a situation. A figure in a man's hat, tied down with an India silk handkerchief, blue cloak and stuff petticoat, suddenly appeared before her, and demanded a supply of articles of female attire. She offered half-a-crown to be rid of this unpleasant guest, for there was something about her which filled the lady with apprehension; but the money was refused, and with a gesture that threw open the cloak, and revealed the real figure of a man, with naked arms, and in a white Marseilles waistcoat. The demand for women's garments was complied with as speedily as possible, and the person hastily went away. The next day, the lady on going to the neighbouring town, beheld a large handbill in the post-office window, offering a reward of 100*l.* for the apprehension of a delinquent charged with high crimes and misdemeanours, and described as "a Dane well known to the nobility and gentry, having been master of the ceremonies at Brighton and Tunbridge Wells." It was the very description of her yesterday's guest.

But when night is added to such a situation, how much is its fearfulness increased! Imagine one or two unprotected women sitting by the fire of a lone house, on a winter's evening, with a consciousness of the insecurity of their situation upon them. How instinct with danger becomes every thing, every movement, every sound!—the stirring of the trees—the whispering of the wind—the rustling of a leaf—the cry of a bird. They are not wishing to listen, but cannot help it; they are all sense; all eye and ear. A foot is heard without, and is lost again! A face is suddenly placed against a pane in the window! the

latch of the door is slowly raised in their sight, or the click of one is heard where it is not seen. Imagine this, and you imagine what has thrilled through the heart, and frozen the blood of many a tenant of a solitary house.

These are not the least of the causes that contribute to produce that timidity of disposition which, in an early part of the chapter, I have said to belong to many country people. My grandfather's house was such a place. It stood in a solitary valley, with a great wood flanking the northern side. It had all sorts of legends and superstitions hanging about it. This field, and that lane, and one chamber or out-building or another, had a character that made them all hermetically sealed to a human foot after dark-hour, as it is there called. My grandmother was a bold woman in some respects, but these fears were perfectly triumphant over her; and she had, on one occasion, met with an incident which did not make her feel very comfortable alone in her house, in the daytime. An Ajax of a woman once besieged her when left entirely by herself; who finding the doors secured against her, began smashing the windows with her fists, as with two sledge-hammers; and declared she would wash her hands in her heart's blood. My grandfather too, had had a little adventure which just served to shew what courage he had, or rather had not. In that primitive time and place, if a tailor were wanted, he did not do his work at his own house, but came to that of his employer, and there worked, day after day, till the job was finished; that is, till all making and mending that could possibly be found about the house by a general examination of garments, was completed.

He then adjourned to another house, and so went the round of the parish. I know not whether the tailors of those primitive times were as philosophical as Heinrich Johann Jung Stilling, and his fellows of Germany, who thus went from house to house, and both there with their employers, and on Sundays when they wandered into the woods, held the most interesting conversations on religion, philosophy, and literature: if this were the case, our country tailors have very much retrograded; and yet it would almost seem so, for my grandfather was passionately fond of Paradise Lost, and on a terrible snowy-day had been reading it all day to the tailor, who had established himself by the parlour fire, with all his implements and work before him. He had been thus employed; but the tailor was gone, and the old gentleman having supped, dropped asleep on the sofa. When he awoke it was late in the night; no one had ventured to disturb him, but all had gone to bed. The house was still; the fire burning low; but he had scarcely become aware of his situation before he was aware also of the presence of some one. As he lay, he saw a man step out of the next room into the one in which he was. The man immediately caught sight of the old gentleman, and suddenly stopped, fixing his eyes upon him; and perhaps to ascertain whether he were asleep, he stepped back and drew himself up in the shadow of the clock-case. The old gentleman slowly raised himself up without a word, keeping his eyes fixed on the shadow of the clock-case, till he had gained his feet, when with a hop, stride, and jump, he cleared the floor, and flew up stairs at three steps at a time. Here he raised a fierce alarm, crying—"there is a sturdy rogue

in the house! there is a sturdy rogue in the house!" But this alarm, instead of getting anybody up, only kept them faster in bed. Neither man, woman, nor child would stir; neither son nor servant, except to bolt every one his own chamber door. In the morning they found the thief had taken himself off through a window, with the modest loan of a piece of bacon.

This house, however, was not quite out of hearing of neighbours. Beyond the wood was a village, thence called Wood-end; and a large horn was hung in the kitchen at the Fall,—so this house was named, which was blown on any occasion of alarm, and brought the inhabitants of the Wood-end thither speedily. The cowardice which had grown upon this family in such matters,—for in others they were bold as lions, and one son was actually killed in a duel,—was become so notorious, that it once brought a good joke upon them. The farm-servants were sitting, after their day's labour, by the kitchen fire at the close of a winter's day. Preparation was making for tea, and there were some of those rich tea-cakes which wealthy country ladies know so well how to make, in the act of buttering. Now I dare say that the sight of those delicious cakes set the mouths of all those hearty working men a-watering; but there was a cunning rogue of a lad amongst them, who immediately conceived the felicitous design of getting possession of them. It is only necessary to say that his name was Jack; for all Jacks have a spice of roguery in them. Jack was just cogitating on this enterprise, when his mistress said, "Jack, those sheep in the Hard-meadow have not been seen to-day. Your legs are younger than anybody else's; so up

and count them before you go to bed;—it is moonlight." Jack, whose blood after the chill of the day was circulating most luxuriously in his veins before that warm hearth, felt inwardly chagrined that so many great lubberly fellows should be passed over, and this unwelcome business be put upon him. "Ay," thought he, "they may talk of young legs, but mistress knows very well that none of those burly fellows *dare* go all the way to the Hard-meadow to-night,—through the dingle; over the brook; and past the hovel where old Chalkings was found dead last August, with his hand still holding fast his tramp-basket, though his clothes were rotten on his back! No! Jack must trudge, though the old gentleman himself were in the way!" This persuasion furnished him at once with a scheme of revenge, and of coming at the tea-cakes. He therefore rose slowly, and with well-feigned reluctance; put on his clouted shoes, which he had put off to indulge his feet with their accustomed portion of liberty and warmth before he went to bed; and folding round him a sack-bag, the common mantle and dread-naught of carters and farmers in wet or cold weather, he went out. Instead of marching off to the Hard-meadow, however, of which he had not the most remote intention, he went leisurely round to the front door, which he knew would be unfastened; for what inhabitants of an old country-house would think of fastening doors till bed-time? He entered quietly; ascended the front stairs; and reaching a large, old oaken chest which stood on the landing-place, all carved and adorned with minster-work, he struck three bold strokes on the lid with a pebble which he had picked up in the yard for the purpose.

At the sound, up started every soul in the kitchen. "What is that?" said every one at once in consternation. The mistress ordered the maid to run and see; but the maid declared that she would not go for the world. "Go you then, Betty cook—go Joe—go Harry!" No, neither Betty, Joe, Harry, nor any body else would stir a foot. They all stood together aghast, when a strange rumbling and grinding sound assailed their ears. It was Jack rubbing the pebble a few times over the carved lid of the chest. This was too much for endurance. A great fellow in a paroxysm of terror, snatched down the horn from its nail, and blew a tremendous blast. It was not long neither before its effect was seen. The people of Wood-end came running in a wild troop, armed with brooms, pitch-forks, spits, scythes, and rusty swords. They were already assured by the dismal blast of the horn that something fearful had occurred, but the sight of the white faces of the family made them grow white too. "What is the matter! What is the matter in heaven's name?" "O! such sounds, such rumblings, somewhere upstairs!" In the heat of the moment, if heat it could be called, it was resolved to move in a body to the mysterious spot. Swords, scythes, pitch-forks fell into due rank; candles were held by trembling hands; and in a truly *fearful* phalanx they marched across the sitting-room and reached the stair-foot. Here was a sudden pause; for there seemed to be heavy footsteps actually descending. They listened—tramp! tramp! it was true; and back fled the whole armed and alarmed troop into the kitchen, and banged the door after them. What was now to be done? Everything which fear

could suggest or terror could enact was done. They were on the crisis of flying out of the house, and taking refuge at Wood-end, when Jack was heard cheerfully whistling as if returning from the field. Jack had made the tramp upon the stairs; for, hearing the sound of the horn, and the approach of many feet below, he thought it was time to be going; and had the armed troop been courageous enough, they would have taken him in the fact. But their fears saved both him and his joke. He came up with a well-affected astonishment at seeing such a body of wild and strangely armed folk. "What is the matter?" exclaimed Jack; and the matter was detailed by a dozen voices, and with a dozen embellishments. "Pshaw!" said Jack, "it is all nonsense, I know. It is a horse kicking in the stable; or a cat that has chucked a tile out of the gutter, or something. Give me a candle; I durst go!" A candle was readily put into his hands, and he marched off, all following him to the foot of the staircase, but not a soul daring to mount a single step after him. Up Jack went—"Why," he shouted, "here's nothing!" "O!" they cried from below, "look under the beds; look into the closets," and look into every imaginable place. Jack went very obediently, and duly and successively returned a shout, that there was nothing; it was all nonsense! At this there was more fear and consternation than ever. A thief might have been tolerated; but these supernatural noises! Who was to sleep in such a house? There was nothing for it, however, but for them to adjourn and move to the kitchen, and talk it all over; and torture it into a thousand forms; and exaggerate it into something

unprecedentedly awful and ominous. The Wood-endians were regaled with a good portion of brown-stout; thanked for their valuable services, and they set off. The family was left alone. "Mistress," said Jack, "now you'd better get your tea; I am sure you must want it." "Nay Jack," said she, "I have had *my* tea: no tea for me to night. I haven't a heart like thee Jack; take my share and welcome."

Jack sate down with the servant maids, and talked of this strange affair, which he persisted in calling "all nonsense;" and devoured the cakes which he had determined to win. Many a time did he laugh in his sleeve as he heard this "great fright," as it came to be called, talked over, and painted in many new colours by the fireside; but he kept his counsel strictly while he continued to live there; for he knew a terrible castigation would be the sure consequence of a disclosure; but after he quitted the place, he made a full and merry confession to his new comrades, and occasioned one long laughter to run all the country round. The people of the Fall, backed by the Wood-endians, persisted that the noises were something supernatural, and that this was an after-invention of Jack's to disgrace them; but Jack and the public continued to have the laugh on their side.

After all, I know not whether the world of sprites and hobgoblins may not assume a greater latitude of action and revelation in these out-of-the-world places than in populous ones; whether the Lars and Lemures, the Fairies, Robin-goodfellows, Hobthrushes and Barguests may not linger about the regions where there is a certain quietness, a simplicity of heart and faith, and ample old rooms, attics, galleries

and grim halls to range over, seeing that they hate cities, and knowledge, and the conceit that attends upon them; for certainly, I myself have seen such sights, and heard such sounds as would puzzle Dr. Brewster himself, with all his natural magic, to account for. In an old house in which my father lived when I was a boy, we had such a capering of the chairs, or what seemed such in the rooms over our heads; such aerial music in a certain chimney corner, as if Puck himself were playing on the bag-pipes; such running of black cats up the bed-curtains and down again, and disappearing, no one knew how; and such a variety of similar supernatural exhibitions, as was truly amusing. And a friend of mine, having suffered a joiner to lay a quantity of elm boards in a little room near a kitchen chimney to dry, was so annoyed by their tumbling and jumbling about, that when the man came the next day to fetch part of them, he desired him to take the whole, giving him the reason for it. "O!" said the man, "you need not be alarmed at that—that is always the way before a coffin is wanted!" As if the ghost of the deceased came and selected the boards for the coffin of its old-world-mate the body.

But enough of the terrors of solitary houses without those of superstition. I close my chapter; and yet I expect, dear readers, that in every place where you peruse this, you will say, "O, these are nothing to what I could have told. If Mr. Howitt had but heard so and so." Thank you, my kind and fair friends in a thousand places—I wish I had.

CHAPTER VI.

MIDSUMMER IN THE FIELDS.

I never see a clear stream running through the fields at this beautiful time of the year but I wish, like old Izaak Walton, to take rod and line, and pleasant book, and wander away into some sylvan, or romantic region, and give myself up wholly to the influence of the season; to angle, and read, and dream by the ever-lapsing water, in green and flowery meadows, for days and weeks, caring no more for all that is going on in this great and many-coloured world, than if there was no world at all beyond these happy meadows so full of sun-shine and quietness. Truly that good old man had hit on one of the ways to true enjoyment of life. He knew that simple habits and desires were mighty ingredients in genuine happiness; that to enjoy ourselves, we must first cast the world and all its cares out of our hearts; we must actually renounce its pomps and vanities; and then how sweet becomes every summer bank; how bright every summer stream; what a delicious tranquillity falls upon our hearts; what a self-enjoyment reigns all through it; what a love of God kindles in it from

all the fair things around. They may say what they will of the old prince of anglers, of his cruelty and inconsistency; from those charges I have vindicated him in another place,—we know that he was pious and humane. We know that in the stillness of his haunts, and the leisure of his latter days, wise and kind thoughts flowed in upon his soul, and that the beauty and sweetness of nature which surrounded him, inspired him with feelings of joy and admiration, that streamed up towards the clear heavens above him in grateful thanksgiving. It is these things which have given to his volume an everlasting charm; and that affect me, at this particular time of the year, with a desire to haunt like places. It may be the green banks of the beautiful streams of Derbyshire—the Wye, or the Dove; for now are they most lovely, running on amongst the verdant hills and bosky dales of the Peak, surrounded by summer's richest charms. Their banks are overhung with deep grass, and many a fair flower droops over them; the foliage of the trees that shroud their many windings, is most delicate; and above them, grey rocks lift their heads, or greenest hills swell away to the blue sky. And as evening falls over them, what a softness clothes those verdant mountains! what a depth of shadow fills those hollows! what a voice of waters rises on the hushed landscape! But even here, in the vale of Trent, it is beautiful. There are a thousand charms gathered about one of these little streams that are hastening towards our fair river. They are charms that belong to this point of time, and that in a week or two will be gone. The spring is gone, with all her long anticipated pleasures. The snow-drop, the

crocus, the blue-bell, the primrose, and the cowslip, where are they? They are all buried children of a delicate time, too soon hurried by.

But see! here are delights that will presently be as irrevocably gone. It is evening. What a calm and basking sunshine lies on the green landscape. Look round,—all is richness, and beauty, and glory. Those tall elms which surround the churchyard, letting the grey tower get but a passing glimpse of the river, and that other magnificent arcade of similar trees which stretch up the side of the same fair stream,—how they hang in the most verdant and luxuriant masses of foliage! What a soft, hazy twilight floats about them! What a slumberous calm rests on them! Slumberous did I say? no, it is not slumberous; it has nothing of sleep in its profound repose. It is the depth of a contemplative trance; as if every tree were a living, thinking spirit, lost in the vastness of some absorbing thought. It is the hush of a dream-land; the motionless majesty of an enchanted forest, bearing the spell of an infrangible silence. And see, over those wide meadows, what an affluence of vegetation! See how that herd of cattle, in colour and form, and grouping, worthy of the pencil of Cuyp or Ruysdael, graces the plenty of that field of most lustrous gold; and all round, the grass growing for the scythe almost overtops the hedges in its abundance. As we track the narrow footpath through them, we cannot avoid a lively admiration of the rich mosaic of colours that are woven all through them—the yellow rattle—the crimson stems and heads of the burnet, that plant of beautiful leaves—the golden trifolium—the light quake-grass—the azure milkwort, and clover scenting

all the air. Hark! the cuckoo sends her voice from the distance, clear and continuous:—

Hail to thee, shouting Cuckoo! in my youth
Thou wert long time, the Ariel of my hope,
The marvel of a summer! it did soothe
To listen to thee on some sunny slope,
Where the high oaks forbade an ampler scope,
Than of the blue skies upward—and to sit,
Canopied, in the gladdening horoscope
Which thou, my planet, flung—a pleasant fit,
Long time my hours endeared, my kindling fancy smit.

And thus I love thee still—thy monotone,
The selfsame transport flashes through my frame,
And when thy voice, sweet sybil, all is flown
My eager ear, I cannot choose but blame.
O may the world these feelings never tame!
If age o'er me her silver tresses spread,
I still would call thee by a lover's name,
And deem the spirit of delight unfled,
Nor bear, though grey without, a heart to Nature dead!

Wiffen's Aonian Hours.

And lo! there are the mowers at work! there are the hay-makers! Green swaths of mown grass—hay-cocks, and wagons ready to bear them away—it is summer, indeed! What a fragrance comes floating on the gale from the clover in the standing grass; from the new-mown hay; and from those sycamore trees, with all their pendant flowers. It is delicious; and yet one cannot help regretting that the year has advanced so far. There, the wild rose is putting out; the elder is already in flower; they are all beautiful, but saddening signs of the swift-winged time. Let us sit down by this little stream, and enjoy the pleasantness that it presents, without a thought of the future. Ah! this sweet place is just in its pride.

The flags have sprung thickly in the bed of the brook, and their yellow flowers are beginning to shew themselves. The green locks of the water-ranunculuses are lifted by the stream, and their flowers form snowy islands on the surface; the water-lilies spread out their leaves upon it, like the pallets of fairy painters; and that opposite bank, what a prodigal scene of vigorous and abundant vegetation it is. There are the blue geraniums as lovely as ever; the meadow-sweet is hastening to put out its foam-like flowers, that species of golden-flowered mustard occupies the connecting space between the land and water; and harebells, the jagged pink lychnis, and flowering grass of various kinds, make the whole bank beautiful. Every plant that is wont to shew itself at this season, is in its place, to give its quota of the accustomed character to the spot; every insect, to beautify it with its hues, and enliven it with its peculiar sound:—

> There is the grashopper, my summer friend,—
> The minute sound of many a sunny hour
> Passed on a thymy hill, when I could send
> My soul in search thereof by bank and bower,
> Till lured far from it by a foxglove flower,
> Nodding too dangerously above the crag,
> Not to excite the passion and the power
> To climb the steep, and down the blossom drag:—
> Them the marsh-crocus joined, and yellow water-flag.
>
> Shrill sings the drowsy wassailer in his dome,
> Yon grassy wilderness, where curls the fern,
> And creeps the ivy; with the wish to roam
> He spreads his sails, and bright is his sojourn,
> 'Mid chalices with dews in every urn:
> All flying things a like delight have found—
> Where'er I gaze, to what new region turn,
> Ten thousand insects in the air abound,
> Flitting on glancing wings that yield a summer's sound.
>
> *Wiffen's Aonian Hours.*

The may-flies, in thousands, are come forth to their little day of life, and are flying up, and dropping again in their own peculiar way. The stone-fly is found head downwards on the bole of that tree. The midges are celebrating their airy and labyrinthine dances with an amazing adroitness. These little creatures pass through a metamorphosis, as they settle on you in your summer walks by river sides, that must strike the careful observer with admiration. You may sometimes see a column of them by the margin of the river, like a column of smoke; and when you come near, numbers of them will settle upon your clothes—small, white, and fleecy creatures. Observe them carefully, and you will see them shake their wings, as in a little convulsive agony, press them to the sides of their body, and fairly creep out of their skins. These skins, fine white films, drawn like a glove from their bodies, and from their very legs, which are but like fine hairs themselves, they leave behind, and dart off into the air as to a new life, and with an accession of new beauty. Dragon-flies of all sizes and colours are hovering, and skimming, and settling amongst the water-plants, or on some natural twig, evidently full of enjoyment. The great azure-bodied one, with its large filmy wings, darts past with reckless speed; and slender ones—blue, and purple, and dun, and black, with long jointed bodies, made as of shining silk by the fingers of some fair lady, and animated for a week or two of summer sunshine by some frolic spell, now pursue each other, and now rest as in sleep. The whitethroat goes flying with a curious cowering motion over the top of the tall grass from one bush to another, where it hops unseen, and

repeats its favourite "chaw-chaw." The willow-warbler, the mocking-bird of England, maintains its incessant imitations of the swallow, the sparrow, the chaffinch, and the whitethroat, flitting and chattering in the bushes that overhang the stream. The landrail repeats its continuous "crake-crake" from the meadow grass, and the water itself ripples on, clear and musical, and chequered with small shadows from many a leaf and bent and moving bough. We lift up our heads—and in the west what a ruby sun—what a gorgeous assemblage of sunset clouds!

Readers and friends, are these not the characters of June fields and June brook-sides? Do they not recal to your memory many a pleasant walk, many a pleasant place, and many pleasant friends? They must: for there is nothing gives us so vivid a sense of the careering of time as the passing of spring and summer.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.—GIPSIES.

All hail! ye British Buccaneers!
Ye English Ishmaelites, all hail!
A jovial and marauding band,
Against the goodliest of the land
Ye go, and ye prevail.

Man's cultured Eden casts ye forth,
Where'er ye list to wander wide,
Wild heaths and wilder glens to tread,
The spacious earth before you spread,
Your hearts your only guide.

The Gipsy King. By Richard Howitt.

The picture of the Rural Life of England must be wofully defective which should omit those singular and most picturesque squatters on heaths and in lanes, the Gipsies. They make part and parcel of the landscape scenery of England. They are an essential portion of our poetry and literature. They are moulded into our memories, and all our associations

of the country by the surprise of our first seeing them, by the stories of their cunning, their petty larcenies, their fortune-tellings, and by the writings of almost all our best poets and essayists. The poets being vividly impressed by anything picturesque, and partaking of some mystery and romance, universally talk of them with an unction of enjoyment. Romance writers have found them more profitable subjects than his Majesty does—Scott and Victor Hugo especially. But the first introduction to them, which most of us had in print, and to which the mind of every man of taste must instantly revert on seeing or hearing of them, is that most admirable and racy one in the Spectator,—that gipsy adventure of our truly beloved and honoured friend, Sir Roger de Coverley—that perfect model of an old English gentleman. Who does not think of this scene with a peculiar delight, especially since it has received so exquisite a representation from the pencil of Leslie? "As I was yesterday riding out in the fields with my friend Sir Roger, we saw at a little distance from us a troop of gipsies. Upon the first discovery of them, my friend was in some doubt whether he should not exert the Justice of the Peace upon a band of lawless vagrants; but not having his clerk with him, who is a necessary counsellor on these occasions, and fearing that his poultry might fare the worse for it, he let the thought drop, but at the same time gave me a particular account of the mischiefs they do in the country in stealing peoples' goods, and spoiling their servants. If a stray piece of linen hangs upon a hedge, says Sir Roger, they are sure to have it: if the hog loses its way in the fields, it is ten to one but it becomes their prey. Our geese cannot lie in peace for them.

"'If a man prosecutes them with severity, his hen-roost is sure to pay for it. They generally straggle into this part of the country about this time of the year, and set the heads of our servant-maids so agog for husbands, that we do not expect to have any business done as it should be while they are in the country. I have an honest dairy-maid who crosses their hands with a piece of silver every summer, and never fails being promised the handsomest young fellow in the parish for her pains. Your friend the butler has been fool enough to be seduced by them; and though he is sure to lose a knife, a fork, or a spoon every time his fortune is told him, generally shuts himself up in the pantry with an old gipsy for above half an hour once a twelvemonth. Sweethearts are the things which they live upon, which they bestow very plentifully upon all those that apply themselves to them. You see now and then some handsome young jades amongst them,—the sluts have very often white teeth and black eyes.'

"Sir Roger observing that I listened with great attention to his account of a people who were so entirely new to me, told me that if I would, they should tell us our fortunes. As I was very well pleased with the knight's proposal, we rid up and communicated our hands to them. A Cassandra of the race, after having examined my lines very diligently, told me that I loved a pretty maid in a corner; that I was a good woman's man; with some other particulars which I do not think proper to relate. My friend Sir Roger alighted from his horse, and exposing his palm to two or three that stood by him, they crumpled it into all shapes, and diligently

scanned every wrinkle that could be made in it; when one of them, who was older and more sunburnt than the rest, told him that he had a widow in his line of life. Upon which the knight cried, 'go, go, you are an idle baggage,' and at the same time smiled upon me. The gipsy, finding that he was not displeased in his heart, told him, after a further inquiry into his hand, that his true-love was constant, and that he should dream of her to night. My old friend cried 'Pish,' and bid her go on. The gipsy told him that he was a bachelor, but would not be so long; and that he was dearer to somebody than he thought. The knight still repeated that she was an idle baggage, and bid her go on. 'Ah, master,' says the gipsy, 'that roguish leer of yours makes a woman's heart ache. You have not that simper about the mouth for nothing.' The uncouth gibberish with which all this was uttered, like the darkness of an oracle, made us the more attentive to it. To be short, the knight left the money with her that he had crossed the hand with, and got up again on his horse.

"As we were riding away, Sir Roger told me, that he knew several sensible people who believed these gipsies now and then foretold very strange things; and for half an hour together appeared more jocund than ordinary. In the height of his good-humour, meeting a common beggar upon the road who was no conjurer, as he went to relieve him, he found his pocket picked; that being a kind of palmistry at which this race of vermin are very dexterous."

This is a perfect piece of gipsyism. Wordsworth, Cowper, Crabbe, and others of our poets, have given very graphic sketches of them; but in all these

descriptions you have the same characteristics, those of a strange, vagabond, out-of-door, artful and fortune-telling people. This was for a long time the only point of view in which they were regarded. That they were a thievish and uncivilizable race everybody knew, but what was their real origin, or what their real country, few cared to inquire. It, in fact, quite satisfied the public to consider them as what they pretended to be, Egyptians. In all the descriptions I have alluded to, no reference whatever is made to their origin. Addison alone hints that he could give some historical remarks on this idle people, but he does not think it worth while. But a more inquisitive age came. It began to strike the minds of intelligent men, as the love of the picturesque, the love of whatever was quiet, ancient, singular, or poetic in the features of the country grew into a strong public feeling, that there was something far more curious and mysterious about these people than merely met the eye. That they were a peculiar variety of the human species, and had hereditary causes, whether prejudices or traditions, which stamped them, as distinctly and as stubbornly, a separate portion of humanity as the Jews, became obvious enough. That which had been supposed a mere gibberish in their mouths, was found to be true Eastern language, and it was discovered that they not merely "infested all Europe," as Addison remarked, but all the world. In every quarter of it they were found, exhibiting the same strange and unchangeable lineaments, manners, and habits; in Egypt, as separate from the Egyptians in speech and custom, as they are separate from the English in England. Great curiosity was now ex-

cited concerning them, and we get a glimpse, in the following verses of the Ettrick Shepherd's, of the speculations which arose out of the consequent inquiries.

Hast thou not noted on the by-way side,
Where England's loanings stretch unsoiled and wide,
Or by the brook that through the valley pours,
Where mimic waves play lightly through the flowers,
A noisy crew far straggling through the glade,
Busied with trifles, or in slumber laid,
Their children lolling round them on the grass,
Or pestering with their sports the patient ass?
The wrinkled grandam there you may espy,
The ripe young maiden with her glossy eye;
Men in their prime—the striplings dark and dun,
Scathed by the storms, and freckled by the sun;
O mark them well when next the group you see,
In vacant barn, or resting on the lea;
They are the remnant of a race of old—
Spare not the trifle for your fortune told!
For there shalt thou behold with nature blent
A tint of mind in every lineament,
A mould of soul distinct, but hard to trace,
Unknown except to Israel's wandering race;
For thence, as sages say, their line they drew—
O mark them well! the tales of old are true!

In these verses, which seem intended by Hogg as the commencement of a poem on the Gipsy history, he goes on to tell us that they were a tribe of Arabs that during the Crusades were induced to act as guides and allies of the Crusaders against Jerusalem, and were therefore compelled, on the retreat of the Christians, to flee too. It was not at all surprising that they should be regarded as the real descendants of Ishmael, for they have all the characteristics of his race,—an Eastern people, retaining all their features of mind or body in unchangeable fixedness—neither

growing fairer in the temperate latitudes, nor darker in the sultry ones; perpetual wanderers and dwellers in tents; active, fond of horses, often herdsmen, artful, thievish, restrained by no principle but that of a cunning policy from laying hands on any man's possessions; fond to enthusiasm of the chase after game, though obliged to follow it at midnight; as everlastingly isolated by their organic or moral conformation from the people amongst whom they dwell as the Jews themselves. The very prophecy seemed fulfilled in them, beyond what it could be in Araby itself, where they have been repeatedly subdued to the dominion of some conqueror, while this tribe seems in all countries to maintain its nature as the genuine posterity of him who was to be a wild hunter in perpetual independence.

The Germans, however, who pursue every subject of curious inquiry with the same searching perseverance, look up this gipsy mystery; and the result of their researches, founded principally on their language, at present leads to the adoption of the theory that they are a Hindu tribe. For a full view of the subject, I must refer my readers to the works of Grellman and Buttner, who have pursued this inquiry with great learning and zeal—to a very able summary in Malte Brun's Geography: my limits will compel me to take a more rapid notice of it. The sum and substance of their case is this. They find occupation in some countries as smiths and tinkers; they mend broken plates, and sell wooden ware. A class of them in Moldavia and Wallachia lead a settled life, and gain a subsistence by working and searching for gold in the beds of rivers. Those in the Bannat of

Hungary are horse-dealers, and are gradually obeying the enactments of Joseph II., by which they are compelled to cultivate the land; but the great majority in Europe abhor a permanent residence and stated hours of labour. The women abuse the credulity of the German and Polish peasants, who imagine that they cure their cattle by witchcraft, and predict fortunate events by inspecting the lineaments of the hand. It is lawful for the wives of the Tchinganes in Turkey to commit adultery with impunity. Many individuals of both sexes, particularly throughout Hungary, are passionately fond of music, the only science in which they have, as yet, attained any degree of perfection. They are the favourite minstrels of the country people: some have arrived at eminence in cathedrals and the choirs of princes. Their guitar is heard in the romantic woods of Spain; and many gipsies, less indolent than the indolent Spaniards, exercise in that country the trade of publicans. They follow willingly whatever occupations most men hate and condemn. In Hungary and Transylvania, they are the flayers of dead horses, and executioners of criminals; the mass of the nation is composed of thieves and mendicants. The total number of these savages in Europe has never been considered less than 300,000; Grellman says 700,000; of these, 150,000 are in Turkey; 70,000 in Wallachia and Moldavia; 40,000 in Hungary and Transylvania; the rest are scattered through Russia, Prussia, Poland, Germany, Jutland, Spain, and other countries. Persia and Egypt are infested with them. They have appeared in Spanish America.

Who then are these people? Grellman and Buttner do not hesitate to pronounce them to be one

of the low Indian castes, Soudras or Correvas, expelled from their country during one of its great revolutions, probably that of Tamerlane, about the year 1400. Their habits as tinkers, musicians, horse-dealers, etc., already alluded to, are exactly in keeping with this supposition; but what is far stronger evidence is, that their language, formerly supposed to be the gibberish of thieves and pick-pockets, is really Indostanée. In the tents of these wanderers is spoken the dialects of the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the *Brachmans*, and the *Budahs*. This, in different tribes, is in some degree dashed with words of Sclavonic, Persic, Permiac, Finnic, Wogoul, and Hungarian. The structure of the auxiliary verb is the same as others in the Indo-Pelasgic tongues, but the pronouns have a remarkable analogy with the Persic, and the declension of nouns with the Turkish. Pallas infers from their dialect that their ancient country was Moultan, and their origin the same as that of the Hindu merchants at present at Astrakhan. Bartolomeo believes they come from Guzerat, perhaps from the neighbourhood of Tatta, where a horde of pirates called Tchinganes still reside. Lastly, Richardson boasts of having found them among the Bazigurs, a wandering tribe of minstrels and dancers. No caste, however, bears so strong a resemblance to them as that of the Soudras, who have no fixed abodes, but live in tents, and sell baskets, mend kettles, and tell fortunes.

The names by which they have been, or are known in different countries are various. They call themselves Romi, Manusch, and Gadzi, each of these appellatives being connected with a different language—the Copt, the Sanscrit, and the Celtic. In

Poland and Wallachia they are Zingani; in Italy and Hungary, Zingari; in Lithuania, Zigonas; Ziguene in Germany; Tchinganes in Turkey; the Atchinganes of the middle ages; in Spain they are Gitanos; in France, Bohemians, from their having passed out of Bohemia into that country. By the Persians they are called Sisech Hindou, or Black Indians. But the most ancient and general name is that of Sinte, or inhabitants of the banks of the Sinde or Indus. The celebrated M. Hasse, has indeed proved that for the last 3000 years there have been in Europe wandering tribes bearing the name of Segynes, or Sinte. He considers the modern gipsies as the descendants of these ancient hordes. Herodotus points out the Sygines on the north side of the Ister. Strabo describes a people called Siginii, inhabiting the Hyrcanian mountains, near the Caspian sea. Pliny speaks of the Caucasian Singi, and of the Indian Singæ. Hesychius reconciles the opinions of the ancients, and calls the Sinde an Indian people. They were noted for their cowardice; for submitting to the lash of Scythian masters, the prostitution of their women, whose name became a term of reproach. Different branches of the same people were scattered through Macedonia, in which was a Sinti district, and in Lemnos, where the Sinties were the workmen of Vulcan.

It will now be sufficiently obvious to the reader what a singular, ancient, and mysterious people are these gipsies that haunt our lanes and commons, and form so striking and poetical a feature in our country scenery. After all the zealous and learned researches into their history and origin, nothing appears already

established beyond the fact, that they are older than Herodotus, the most ancient of profane historians; that for more than 3000 years they have been wandering through the world as they do at present; and that their language exhibits incontestable evidence of an oriental origin. The ravages of Tamerlane may perhaps help to account for the circumstance of their pressing upon Western Europe in 1400 in such unusual numbers; but they were wanderers long before Tamerlane's days. Were they enemies of Krishna? for they boast of having formerly rejected Christ. They pretend that they were once a happy people, under kings of their own; but their traditionary knowledge seems nearly extinct. Perhaps an increasing acquaintance with the East and Eastern literature may cast some light on the origin of this peculiar variety of the human race. In the mean time we may proceed to take a close view of them as they now appear in this kingdom. From the first moment of their attracting the public attention in this part of Europe, they have always exhibited the same artful character,—a character above the trammels of either superstition or religion. They have therefore adopted the most plausible pretences to effect their purposes; and for a long time triumphed over the credulity of the christian princes, at all times over that of the common people. Their first appearance in France, as related by Pasquin is curious enough. "On August 27th, 1427, came to Paris twelve penitents, Penanciers, as they called themselves, viz: a duke, an earl, and ten men, all on horse-back, and calling themselves good christians. They were of Lower Egypt, and gave out, that not long before,

the christians had subdued their country, and obliged them to embrace christianity on pain of death. Those who were baptized were great lords in their own country, and had a king and queen there. Soon after their conversion, the Saracens overrun the country, and obliged them to renounce christianity. When the emperor of Germany, the king of Poland, and the christian princes heard of this, they fell upon them, and obliged the whole of them, both great and small, to quit the country, and go to the Pope at Rome, who enjoined them seven years' penance, to wander over the world without lying in a bed.

"They had been wandering five years when they came to Paris. First the principal people, and soon after the commonalty, about 100, or 120—reduced, according to their account, from 1000 or 1200, when they went from home; the rest, with their king and queen, being dead. They were lodged by the police at some distance from the city, at Chapel St. Denis.

"Nearly all of them had their ears bored, and wore two silver rings in each, which they said were esteemed ornaments in their country. The men were black; their hair curled; the women, remarkably black; their only clothes a large old duffle garment, tied over their shoulders with a cloth or cord, and under it a miserable rocket. In fact, they were the most poor, miserable creatures that ever had been seen in France; and, notwithstanding their poverty, there were amongst them women who, by looking into people's hands, told their fortunes, and what was worse, they picked people's pockets of their money, and got it into their own, by telling these things through art magic, etc."

The subtlety of these modern Gibeonites cannot be sufficiently admired. They did not venture to alarm the country by coming at once in full strength into it, but sent a detachment, mounted on horseback as princes, to pave the way by their tale of sufferings; then came a larger troop, in true Gibeonitish condition, to excite the popular commiseration; and that being done, their numbers gradually increased; and under these and similar pretences, they rambled over France for a whole century, when their real character being sufficiently obvious, and their numbers daily increasing, they were banished by proclamation. The same policy was pursued towards them in all the countries of Europe, if we except Hungary and Wallachia. In Spain, sentence of banishment being found ineffectual, in 1492 an edict of extermination was published; but they only slunk into the mountains and woods, and reappeared in a while as numerously as before. The order of banishment not succeeding in France, in 1561 all governors of cities were commanded to drive them away with fire and sword; and in 1612 a new order for their extermination came out. In 1572, they were expelled from the territories of Milan and Parma, as they had before been driven from the Venetian boundaries. In Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands, repeated enactments were made for their expulsion. In Germany from 1500 to 1577, various similar decrees were promulgated against them. Under these laws they suffered incredible miseries. They were imprisoned; chased about like wild beasts, and put to death without mercy: but, as the European states did not act in concert, when they were driven from one they found

an asylum in another; and whenever the storm blew over, they again gradually reappeared in their old haunts. The Empress Theresa, and afterwards the Emperor Joseph II., seem to have been the only sovereigns who set themselves in earnest to reclaim and civilize this singular people; and we have seen that in Hungary some of them are gradually submitting to the regulations made by these wise monarchs.

Their introduction to this kingdom, and their after treatment were similar. At first they were received as princes and kings, and excited commiseration by the tale of their injuries. They had royal and parliamentary passes granted them, to go through the country seeking relief, as many of the parish records yet bear testimony. So late as 1647 there appears an entry in the constable's accounts at Uttoxeter, in Staffordshire, of four shillings being given to forty-six Egyptians, travelling with a pass from parliament, to seek relief by the space of six months. But when this delusion was past, and it was seen that they had no intention of quitting the country, they became persecuted by justices of the peace and parish constables, as thieves and vagrants; and the rapid enclosures of waste lands during the war, tended greatly to break up their haunts, and put them into great straits.

About twenty years ago John Hoyland, a minister of the Society of Friends, being struck with commiseration for their condition, began to inquire into their real character; and the researches of Grellman being made known to him, he visited their encampments in various places in Northamptonshire, Hainault Forest, and Norwood near London. He also sought them out

in their winter-quarters in London; and the result of his inquiries satisfied him that the English gipsies were a genuine portion of the great tribe described by Grellman; that they possessed the same Oriental language, specimens of which he has given in his history. Mr. Hoyland could not ascertain what were the actual numbers of these people in England. They had been stated in parliament to be not less than 30,000, but on what authority did not appear; but it was very evident that enclosures, and the severity of the magistrates had reduced their numbers. Probably many of them had emigrated. Norwood used to be their great resort, but its enclosure had broken up that rendezvous, yet it nevertheless appeared, that considerable numbers wintered in London, and at the earliest approach of spring set out on their summer progress through various parts of the country, especially in the counties of Surrey, Bedford, Buckingham, Hereford, Monmouth, Somerset, Wilts, Southampton, Cambridge, and Huntingdon.

Mr. Hoyland extended his researches to Scotland, and the most prompt assistance was offered him in his inquiries in that country. A circular was dispatched to the sheriff of every county, soliciting, through the medium of an official organ, all the intelligence which could be obtained on the subject. It was found that there were very few gipsies in Scotland at all. From thirteen counties the reports were—"No gipsies resident in them." From most others the answer was, that they appeared there only as occasional passengers. The Border appeared to be their chief resort, and respecting those Sir Walter Scott, then plain Walter Scott, addressed a very characteristic letter to the author. His

account of them tallies exactly with that he has given in his celebrated novels. He and Mr. Smith, the Baillie of Kelso, agree in describing them as a single colony at Yetholm, and one family removed thence to Kelso. This colony appears to have acquired a character more daring and impetuous than the gipsies of England; in fact, to have exhibited the true old Border spirit: probably partly from example and partly from intercourse with some of the Border families. Mr. Baillie Smith gives the following instance of this spirit:—"Between Yetholm and the Border farms in Northumberland, there were formerly, as in most border situations, some uncultivated lands, called the Plea Lands, or Debateable Lands, the pastorage of which was generally eaten up by the sorners and vagabonds on both sides of the marshes. Many years ago, Lord Tankerville and some other of the English borderers, made their request to Sir David Bennet and the late Mr. Wauchope, of Niddry, that they would accompany them at a riding of the Plea Lands, who readily complied with their request. They were induced to this, as they understood that the gipsies had taken offence, on the supposition that they might be circumscribed in their pasture for their shelties, and asses, which they had held a long time, partly by stealth and partly by violence. Both threats and entreaties were employed to keep them away; and at last Sir David obtained a promise from some of the heads of the gang, that none of them would shew their faces on the occasion.

"They, however, got upon the hills in the neighbourhood, whence they could see everything that passed. At first they were very quiet, but when they

saw the English Court-Book spread out on a cushion before the clerk, and apparently taken in a line of direction interfering with that which they considered to be their privileged ground, it was with great difficulty that the most moderate of them could restrain the rest from running down and taking vengeance even in sight of their own lord of the manor. They only abstained for a short time, and no sooner had Sir David and the other gentlemen taken leave of each other in the most polite and friendly manner, as border chiefs are wont to do, since border feuds ceased, and had departed to a sufficient distance, than the clan, armed with bludgeons and pitchforks, and such other hostile weapons as they could find, rushed down in a body, and before the chiefs on either side had reached their homes, there was neither English tenant, horse, cow, or sheep left upon the premises."

This account of their descent on the Plea Lands is like one of Sir Walter Scott's own vivid sketches of border life; and the following anecdote, also related by Mr. Baillie Smith, shews how truly they had imbibed the border spirit of clanship. "When I first knew anything about the colony, old Will Faa was their king, or leader, and had held the sovereignty for many years. Meeting at Kelso with Mr. Walter Scott, whose discriminating habits and just observations I had occasion to know from his youth, and at the same time seeing one of my Yetholm friends in the horse-market, I merely said to Mr. Scott, 'Try to get before that man with the long drab coat; look at him on your return, and tell me whether you ever saw him, and what you think of him.' He was so good as to indulge me; and rejoining me said without

hesitation, 'I never saw the man that I know of, but he is one of the gipsies of Yetholm that you told me of several years ago.' I need scarcely say that he was perfectly right.

"The descendants of Faa, now take the name of *Fall*, from the Messrs. Fall of Dunbar, who, they pride themselves in saying, are of the same stock and lineage. When old Will Faa was upwards of eighty years of age, he called on me at Kelso, in his way to Edinburgh, telling me that he was going to see the laird, the late Mr. Nisbett of Dirleton, as he understood that he was very unwell, and himself now being old, and not so stout as he had been, he wished to see him once more before he died. The old man set out by the nearest road, which was by no means his common practice. Next market day some of the farmers informed me that they had been in Edinburgh, and seen Will Faa upon the bridge (the south bridge was not built then), that he was tossing about his old brown hat, and huzzaing with great vociferation that he had seen the laird before he died. Indeed Will himself had no time to lose, for having set his face homewards, by the way of the sea-coast, to vary his route, as is the general custom with the gang, he only got the length of Coldingham when he was taken ill and died."

No one can fail to recognise in these border gipsies the Faas and Gordons of Guy Mannering, the desperate clan of Meg Merrilies and Derncleugh. Scott, indeed informs us that his prototype of Meg Merrilies was Jean Gordon, an inhabitant of Kirk-Yetholm in the Cheviot hills, adjoining to the English border. The Faas, of which family her mother was, were the

lineal descendants of John Faa, who styled himself Lord and King of Little Egypt, and with a numerous retinue entered Scotland, in the reign of Queen Mary.

The difference between the English and Scotch gipsies was singularly exemplified in Jean Gordon's own family. The English gipsies have generally had the policy to commit no capital offences; but Jean's sons were all hanged one day. Scott, in the eighth chapter of Guy Mannering, says, their mixture with the Border people gave them a peculiar ferocity, quite alien to their original character. "They understood all out-of-door sports, especially otter-hunting, fishing and finding game. They had the best and boldest terriers, and sometimes had good pointers for sale. In winter, the women told fortunes, the men shewed tricks of legerdemain; and these accomplishments helped to wile away a weary or stormy evening in the circle of the 'farmer's ha'.' The wildness of their character, and the indomitable pride with which they despised all regular labour, commanded a certain awe, which was not diminished by the consideration that these strollers were a vindictive race, and were restrained by no check either of fear or conscience, from taking desperate vengeance upon those who had offended them. These tribes were, in short, the *Parias* of Scotland, living like wild Indians among European settlements; and like them, judged of rather by their own customs, habits, and opinions, than as if they had been members of the civilized part of the community. Some hordes of them yet remain, chiefly in such situations as afford a ready escape into a waste country, or into another jurisdiction. Nor are the features of their character much softened. Their numbers are,

however, so greatly diminished, that instead of one hundred thousand, as calculated by Fletcher of Saltoun, it would now perhaps be impossible to collect above five hundred throughout all Scotland."

Since writing so far, I have visited Kirk-Yetholm, and can testify to the correctness of these details. It was in June 1836, that I was at this remarkable haunt of this singular class of gipsies. The tribe was then, according to their regular custom, encamping, probably far off on the heaths of Scotland, or in the green lanes of England; and their houses, to the number of about a score, stood along one side of the village, all tenantless, with closed shutters, and doors barricadoed with boards, or locked or nailed up. They had a strange look of desertion, amid the peopled village. Along the lane side leading to the neighbouring hills, extended a strip of land, divided into as many allotments as there were houses, in which were growing their crops of corn and potatoes, left, till their return, to providence and the forbearance of their neighbours; and we were assured that the tribe would not make their appearance here till the crops were ready to house, when they would come and get them in, and then away again till the setting in of winter. We found the feud between them and the shepherds still kept up as hotly as ever, and likely to continue so, from the peculiar location of the land above spoken of, on which they claim to pasture their horses. About a mile from the village, lies a region of pastoral hills, most beautiful in their greenness and loftiness. They are covered from vale to summit with the softest and finest turf, and their loftiest steeps are dotted with flocks. In the very midst of these hills, loftier and

more naked than the rest, rises the one which the gipsies and other inhabitants of Yetholm claim. Nothing could be more ingeniously contrived, if by contrivance it had been done, to effect a constant bickering between the shepherds and the Yetholmers. The gipsies of course drive their horses up to their own hill, and nothing is more natural than that seeing better pasture all around them, and no fence to prevent them, they should go down and enjoy it. It is equally natural that the shepherds should be on the look-out, and the moment they find the horses trespassing, should drive them out into the lane leading to the village, and close the gates behind them. This also is expected by the gipsies, and the moment the horses make their appearance at the village, they are driven back again to the hills. Here is perpetual food for resentment and hostility, and to such a height does it sometimes rise, that a gentleman of Kelso informed me that he has seen at Yetholm wool-fair such affrays between the gipsies and the shepherds as would out-do Donnybrook.

We found a Will Faa still the reputed king of the tribe. He was an old man, having none of the common features of the gipsy—his Border blood having done away with the black eyes and swarthy skin; but Will had all the propensities of the gipsy, except that of encamping; smuggling, fishing, and shooting appeared to have been the business of his life. We were told that in an affray with the revenue officers he had defended a narrow bridge somewhere near Bamborough Castle, while his party made their escape, and had stood fighting singly with his cudgel till it was cut down by the cutlasses of the officers to "twa

nieves lang," and till he finally got a cut across the arm which disabled him. When we asked him of the truth of this story, his grey eyes kindled up into a wild fire, and stretching out his two arms together, he shewed us, with a significant gesture, that one was still at least two inches longer than the other. Old Will Faa had risen into great importance through the writings of Sir Walter Scott. He told us that Sir Martin Archer Shee had been down to take his likeness. He was in daily request at the houses of the neighbouring nobility and gentry to catch trout for them, being intimately acquainted with all the streams of the country round, and all the arts of filling his creel out of them. Will, therefore, is sure to be found either by the side of one of the trout streams, or in the kitchen of some of the neighbouring halls, telling his exploits and drinking his toddy. His niece, who was absent with the tribe, was said to be the belle of the camp; a true gipsy beauty, dark and "weel fa'ured."

Such is the present state of the gipsies of England and Scotland. Their numbers are evidently everywhere on the decrease; yet what do remain in England retain all their ancient characteristics. These characteristics have never been more accurately delineated than by Richard Howitt, in his poem of the "Gipsy King," in the Metropolitan Magazine for June 1836. The groups proceeding to the coronation of their king are living.

Now come in groups the gipsy tribes,
From northern hills, from southern plains;
And many a panniered ass is swinging
The child that to itself is singing
Along the flowery lanes.

Stout men are loud in wrangling talk,
  Where older tongues are gruff and tame;
Keen maiden laughter rings aloft,
Whilst many an undervoice is soft
  From many a talking dame.

Their beaver hats are weather stained,—
  The one black plume is sadly gay;
Their squalid brats are slung behind,
In cloaks that flutter to the wind,
  Of scarlet, brown, and grey.

The king himself is distinguished by some touches that are the life itself, but which I never recollect seeing elsewhere introduced.

The slouching hat our hero wore,
  The crown wherewith he king was crowned;
Wherein a pipe and a crow's feather
Were stuck in fellowship together,
  Was by a hundred winters browned.

His sceptre was a stout oak sapling,
  Round which a snake well-carved was wreathed;
Cunning and strength that well bespoke,
Whilst from his frame, as from an oak,
  "Deliberate valour breathed."

His footstool was the solid earth;
  His court spread out in pomp before him,
The heath arrayed in summer's smiles;
His empire broad, the British isles;
  His dome the heavens arched o'er him.

Antique and flowing was his dress:
  And from his temples bold and bare,
Fell back in many a dusky tress,
As liberal as the wilderness,
  His ample growth of hair.

Like Cromwell's was his hardy front,
  Where thought but feeling none, was shewn;
Where underneath a flitting grace,
Was firmly built up in his face,
  A hardness as of stone.

They are not to be confounded with a tribe of wandering potters, who live in tents like them. The true gipsies are readily distinguished by their invariable jet-black hair, black sparkling eyes, Indian complexions, and their genuine Oriental language. On the extensive heaths of Surrey, since my residence in that county, I have met with frequent camps of them. In the midland counties, although there is less waste land, they are not unfrequently to be seen. They are there chiefly the Lovell, Boswell, and Kemp gangs. They are great people still for kings and chiefs. Every district has its king. One of these died in the summer of 1835, in their camp in Bestwood Park, in Nottinghamshire; and thousands of people went to see him lie in state. They conveyed his body in a cart to Eastwood, a distance of nine miles, and would fain have stipulated with the clergyman for his interment in the church; not on account of any notion of the sanctity of the place, but for its security. This being refused, they chose a place in the churchyard, for which they paid a handsome sum, and ordered it to be fenced off with iron railings. An old beldame of the tribe said to me, that it was hard that he could not be buried in a church, as most of his ancestors had been before him.

This gang had no less than nine horses, which in the day time grazed in the bare lanes; but if they were not turned into the fields at night, they throve wonderfully on bad commons. The farmers complained dreadfully of their pulling up their hedges for fuel. The whole race seems to have no fear of man; they are troubled with no *mauvaise honte.* The men seldom condescend to solicit you, but the women are

always anxious to lay hold of your money under pretence of telling your fortune; and the moment you approach their encampment, out comes a troop of little impudent, though not insolent rogues, to beg everything and anything they can. The women, many of them, in their youth, are fine strapping figures, with handsome brown faces and most brilliant and speaking eyes—they have a peculiar *poco-curante* air and jaunty gait, and are extremely fond of finery. Their costume is unique, and pretty uniform,—scarlet cloaks, black velvet bonnets with large wide pokes trimmed with lace; a handkerchief thrown over the head under the bonnet, and tied beneath the chin; long pendant earrings, black stockings, and ankle-boots. So far from shunning any intercourse or inquiries, they approach you with a ready smile and a style of flattery peculiar to them. "A good-day to you, sir; your honour is born to fortune. I see that by the cast of your countenance. It was a right lucky planet that shone on your honour's birth!" If you know anything of their language, they are only too glad to talk to you in it. Accost a gipsy with "Shaushan, Palla?" "how do you do, brother?" and you will see the effect.

This singular race of people, of whom Grellman calculates there are not less than 700,000 in Europe, seemed to demand a more comprehensive account in the Rural Life of England, than has hitherto been given in any one work. Many of my readers, I am persuaded, will regard them for their antiquity, the mystery of their origin, the strangeness of their history and life, with deeper feelings than they have hitherto done; and it may be well for such as live in those

parts of the country which the gipsies haunt, to ask themselves whether something may not be done by education, and other means, to reclaim those wild denizens of heaths and lanes, or to give them some greater portion of the knowledge and benefits of civilized life. A considerable number have sent their children to schools during the winters in London; and these children, though compared by one of their schoolmasters, at their first entrance, to wild birds suddenly put into a cage, and ready to beat themselves against the bars, having no sense of restraint, soon became not only perfectly orderly, amongst the very first for quickness and avidity in learning; but expressed the utmost regret when obliged to leave at spring. I once saw a woman in a gipsy tent, reading the Bible to a circle of nine children, all her own! and though, on coming near, her blue eyes and light hair shewed her to be an English woman, the daughter, as I found, of a gamekeeper, who had married one of the Boswell gang, yet the interest which the children took in her reading of the Bible, and the interest which she assured me the whole camp took in it, were sufficient evidence that it is only for want of being taught that they still remain in ignorance of the best knowledge. They have been so long treated with contempt and severity, that they naturally look on all men as their enemies. For my part, when I see a horde of them coming on some solitary way, with their dark Indian faces, their scarlet-cloaked women, their troops of little vivacious savages, their asses and horses laden with beds and tents, and, trudging after them, their guardian dogs,—I cannot help looking on them as an Eastern tribe, as fugitives of

a most ancient family, as a living enigma in human history—and feeling that, with all their Arab-like propensities, they have great claims on our sympathies, and on the splendid privileges of a Christian land.

An incident which occurred to me this summer, shewed me most strikingly how next to impossible it is for the peculiar manner and costume of the English gipsies to be personated. In an evening drive on the 27th of July, with a young friend staying with us, as we passed through, or by, the little rustic hamlet of Stoke D'Abernon, for it consists of houses scattered along one side of the road, I was struck with two singular female figures at a little distance before us. They were both young—the one about the middle size, the other rather taller. The taller one was dressed in a dark cotton bed-gown, dark petticoat, grey stockings and shoes; on her head was tied a yellow silk handkerchief, and in her hand she held, as a walking-staff, a long stout hazel wand, recently cut from the hedge. The other had on also a short bed-gown, but of a pink colour, striped and figured with white, a dark petticoat, and ankle-boots. On her head she wore an old straw bonnet. As my eye caught them at a distance,—the one standing with her tall stick by a pool on one side of the way, the other in the act of begging from, or addressing, a gentleman who was sitting on a stile, I could not help exclaiming,—"What have we got here!—Maria de Moulins and Madge Wildfire?" As we drew near, they came running up to us, and, one on each side of

the pony-chaise, began begging most importunately: "Will you give us sixpence? Do give us sixpence! Do, dear gentleman, give us sixpence! Dear lady, do tell the gentleman to give us sixpence!" It was only necessary to give a slight glance at the faces of these beggars, and to hear one tone of their voices, to know that it was a frolic—that they were *ladies* of education and family, from some of the neighbouring country houses, thus dressed up. They had hair and eyes jet-black as any gipsies; and after all that has been said of the beauty of some of the gipsy women—and they have a great deal—were handsomer than any gipsies I ever saw. The taller, who appeared the younger of the two, was a very lovely woman, of a slender figure, the exquisite symmetry of which was not to be disguised by the rustic dress she had assumed. The other had, or affected, a slight lisp. Irresistible as such beggars might appear, I resolved to refuse them, in order to see how they would keep up the attempt, and how they would take a refusal. I therefore said, laughing, "O! I have no sixpences for beggars like you; you certainly are very charming beggars; you have chosen a very rustic costume; you act your part very well indeed, and I hope you will enjoy your frolic." All this time I kept driving on at a good pace; but the resolute damsels still ran on, importuning for a sixpence. One soon dropped behind—the taller one still ran on with her stick in her hand, in a voice of much softness and sweetness still begging for sixpence—as they were poor strangers, and had got nothing all day! As she ran, this sort of badinage passed:—"Where do you come from?" "O we have come all the way from Epsom

to meet our young man here, and he has deceived us."—"Well, I hope no young man will deceive you more cruelly." "Dear gentleman, if you won't give us sixpence, give us a penny then to buy us a glass of ale!" "O, you are no ale-drinkers—what should you think of a glass of gin?" "I should like something, for I am *very* tired: and what is sixpence to you?—you have a very good horse in your chaise; I have no doubt you are a gentleman of independent fortune—*do* give us sixpence!" "No, I wish I were half as rich as you are." Here the fair beggar stopped, and turned round with an air of very beautiful disdain. As she went back to join her companion, we were again struck with the grace of her form, and the buoyancy of her carriage.

My impression was that these ladies were merely acting beggars; but we soon found that they were acting gipsies; for they offered to tell almost every body's fortunes, and actually did tell some. As we returned, we met them coming up a hollow woody lane, near Bookham Common, about a mile from where we left them; and behold! they, and the gentleman who was there sitting on the stile—a military-looking man with light mustachios — were walking familiarly on together. It was evident that they had found "their young man!" It was a group worthy of the pencil of Stothard; and on the opposite side of the lane, from a cottage above it, out were come a countrywoman, and six or seven children, of different ages, in their rustic costume, and stood to look at them—a little picture after the very heart of Collins. The moment our actresses saw us, they motioned their escort to move off to the other side of the way, and to

walk on, as though he did not belong to them, and again renewed their importunity as we passed. I merely smiled, and moved my hat to them. As we proceeded, I stopped and asked of all the country people I met—who was that gentleman? and who the ladies dressed as beggars? The miller thought the gentleman was from Bookham Lodge, the seat of Captain Blackwood—he heard a large party of gentry was just come there; "but the women, sir, they are Dutch women!" Dutch women! Broom-girls, in fact! Broom-girls, with legs and arms like young elephants! and broad solid figures, as if cut out of blocks of wood—how very like those slim and elegant creatures! But it was enough for the worthy miller, whose fortune they had offered to tell, that they had on short bedgowns and dark petticoats. A grocer from Epsom, with his spring-cart, going as they do all round the country, from one gentleman's house to another, *had* had his fortune told by them, and was lost in amaze at the announcement that he had had nine children, six of which were still living—five girls and one boy; the very facts to a hair! A farmer and his wife at Stoke, never dreamt that the gentleman whom they had noticed belonged to these "young baggages of beggars," that had been sitting on the bank by the road-side opposite their house; but his wife said one of them was the handsomest beggar she *ever* saw. "Ay, they were both good-looking," said the man, "and had famous things on." The groom at the parsonage gate "didn't know the gentleman in the mustachios; but the women, bless you, they were no *ladies*." "Why?" "O, they carried it on too far for ladies here, I assure you." "What

did they do?" "O! they came ringing at the bell like new 'uns; six or seven times they called us out—they would take no nay."

Little did these fair *ladies*, when sallying out for this frolic in the sylvan lanes of Surrey, dream, I dare say, that they should meet "a chiel takin' notes," that would put their exploits into print. Here they are, however; and if they should chance to see this, I must tell them, that they were very sweet nondescripts, but not very perfect beggars; and far, far indeed from perfect Zinganies. For Madge Wildfires, they were not amiss; but beggars, impudent as they are, seldom ask for sixpences; seldom appear in new apparel; never run by the side of carriages—that is left to beggar children. Pleading looks, and a pitiful whining tone, with low genuflections, mark the young beggar woman, as she stands fixed at one place;—her husband is dead, and she is going home to her parents or parish; or he is gone for a soldier, and she is following to the garrison. Lancashire witches they would have done for capitally—but then witches don't tell fortunes by palmistry; their vocation is by spell and cauldron; and as for gipsies, why it is just as difficult to mistake the particular expression and cultivated voice of an English lady, as it is the features and voice of the real gipsy-woman. Black eyes and black hair these ladies had; but they had neither the olive skin, nor the bold, easy *degagée* air of the gipsy belle; and what do gipsies with such beautifully *slender* and delicate hands? They were importunate; but nothing but a life and an education in the gipsy-camp, and perhaps the blood and descent of the gipsy, can give the peculiar style of palaver—

the *suaviter in modo*—the unique flattery—the "you are born fortunate, sir"—with which the gipsy accosts you. And the costume! The gipsy wears nothing short. She has a long gown,—a long red cloak—a handkerchief tied over her head, it is true, but upon *it* a large flapping bonnet with lace trimming, or black beaver hat;—instead of that fairy form, she is generally strapping, tall, and strong—and instead of those taper ankles and small feet, which could evidently dance down the four-and-twenty hours, she has her lower limbs arrayed in black stockings and stout shoes that would do for a wagoner. Young gipsy women walk with sticks! who indeed ever saw an old one with one? Knowing now who these ladies were, I should, beforehand, have expected a closer personation of the gipsy; but the result only proves the difficulty of the attempt. It must, however be confessed, that this was as pretty a little rural adventure as one could desire to meet with.

CHAPTER II.

NOOKS OF THE WORLD; OR, A PEEP INTO THE BACK SETTLEMENTS OF ENGLAND.

THERE are thousands of places in this beautiful kingdom, which, if you could change their situation—if you could take some plain, monotonous, and uninteresting tracts from the neighbourhood of large cities, from positions barren and of daily observance, and place these in their stead—would acquire an incalculable value; while the common spots would serve the present inhabitants of those sweet places just as well, and often far better, for the ordinary purposes of their lives—for walking over in the day, sleeping in during the night, and raising grass, cattle, and corn upon. The dwellers of cities—the men who have made fortunes, or are making them, and yet long for the quietness and beauty of the country—but especially the literary, the nature-loving, the poetical—would, to use a common expression, jump at them; and, if it were in their power to secure them, would make

heavens-upon-earth of them. Yes! they are such spots as thousands are longing for; as the day-dreaming young, and the world-weary old, are yearning after, and painting to their mind's eye, daily, in great cities; and the dull, the common-place, the imperci-pient of their beauty and their glory, are dwelling in them:—paradisiacal fields and magnificent mountains; or cloudy hollows in their mottled sides; or little *cleuchs* and glens, hidden and green—overhung with wild wood—rocky, and resounding with dashing and splashing streams;—places, where the eye sees the distant flocks and their slowly-stalking shepherds—the climbing goat, the soaring eagle: and the ear catches their far-off cries; whence a thousand splendours and pageants, changing aspects, and kindling and dying glories, in earth and sky, are witnessed; the cheerful arising of morning—the still, crimson, violet, purple, azure, dim grey, and then dark fading away of day into night, are watched; where the high and clear grandeur and solitude of night, with its moon and stars, and wandering breezes, and soul-enwrapping freshness, are seen and felt. Such places as these, and the brown or summer-empurpled heath, with its patch of ancient forest; its blasted, shattered, yet living old trees, greeting you with feelings and fancies of long-past centuries; the clear, rushing brook; the bubbling and most crystalline spring; and the turf that springs under your feet with a delicious elasticity, and sends up to your senses a fresh and forest-born odour; or cottages perched in the sides of glades, or on eminences by the sea—the soul-inspiring sea—with its wide views of coming and going ships, its fresh

gales, and its everlasting change of light and life, on its waters, and on its shores; its sailors, and its fishermen, with all their doings, families, and dependencie —every one of them thoroughly covered and saturated with the spirit of picturesque and homely beauty; or inland hollows and fields, and old hamlets, lying amid great woods and slopes of wondrous loveliness;—if we could but turn things round, and bring these near us, and unite, at once, city advantages, city society, and them! But it never can be! And there are living in them, from generation to generation, numbers of people who are not to be envied, because they know nothing at all of the enviableness of their situation.

We are continually labouring to improve society—to diffuse education—to confer higher and ampler religious knowledge; but these people know little of all this—experience little of its effect; for their abodes, and natural paradises, lie far from the great tracks of travel and commerce; far from our great roads; in the most out-of-the-world places—the very nooks of the world.

If you come by chance upon them, you are struck with their admirable beauty, their solemn repose, their fresh and basking solitude. You cannot help exclaiming, What happy people must these be! But, when you come to look closer into them, the delusion vanishes. They do not, in fact, see any beauty that you see. Their minds have never been stirred from the sluggish routine of their daily life; their mental eye has never been unsealed, and directed to survey the advantages of their situation. They have been occupied with other things. Like the farmer's lad

mentioned by Wordsworth, their souls have become encrusted in their own torpor.

> A sample should I give
> Of what this stock produces, to enrich
> The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,
> "Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill notes
> Impart new gladness to the morning air?"
> Forgive me, if I venture to suspect
> That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
> Are of no finer frame;—his joints are stiff;
> Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
> Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
> Fellows to those that lustily upheld
> The wooden stools, for everlasting use,
> Whereon our fathers sate. And mark his brow!
> Under whose shaggy canopy are set
> Two eyes, not dim, but of a healthy stare;
> Wild, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange;
> Proclaiming boldly that they never knew
> A look or motion of intelligence,
> From infant conning of the Christ-cross-row,
> Or puzzling through a Primer, line by line,
> Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.
>
> *The Excursion, B.* 8.

This, however, is one of the worst specimens of the most stupified class — farm-servants. Wordsworth himself makes his good and wise *Wanderer*, a shepherd in his youth, and describes him, when a lad, as impressed with the deepest sense of nature's majesty. He represents him, in one of the noblest passages of the language, as witnessing the sun rise from some bold head-land, and

> Rapt into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise.

And, indeed, the mountaineer must be generally excepted from that torpor of mind I have alluded to. The forms of nature that perpetually surround him,

are so bold and sublime, that they almost irresistibly impress, excite, and colour his spirit within him; and those legends and stirring histories which generally abound in them, co-operate with these natural influences. This unawakened intellect dwells more generally amid the humbler and quieter forms of natural beauty; in the "sleepy hollows" of more champaign regions.

It might be supposed that these nooks of the world would, in their seclusion, possess very much one moral character; but nothing can be more untrue. Universally, they may seem old-fashioned, and full of a sweet tranquillity; but their inhabitants differ widely in character in different parts of the country—widely often in a short space, and in a manner that can only be accounted for by their less or greater communion with towns, less or greater degree of education extended to them—and the kind extended. Where they are far from towns, and hold little intercourse with them, and have no manufactory in them, they may be dull, but they are seldom very vicious. If they have had little education, they lead a very mechanical sort of life; are often very boorish, and have very confined notions and contracted wishes; are rude in manner, but not bad in heart. I have been in places—ay, in this newspaper-reading age, where a newspaper never comes; where they have no public-house, no school, no church, and no doctor; and yet the district has been populous. But, in similarly situated places, where yet they had a simple, pious pastor—some primitive patriarch, like the venerable Robert Walker, of whom so admirable an account is given by Wordsworth; where they have been blest with such a man amongst them, and where

they have had a school; where they knew little of what was going on in the world, and where yet you were sure to find, in some crypt-like hole in the wall, or in a little fire-side window, about half a dozen books—the Bible, "Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs," "Baxter's Saint's Everlasting Rest," "Romaine's Life of Faith," or his "Drop of Honey from the Rock Christ," "Macgowan's Life of Christ," or "Drelincourt on Death," and such like volumes; or "Robinson Crusoe," "Philip Quarle," "The History of Henry the Earl of Moreland," "Pilgrim's Progress," or "Pamela;"—have you found a simplicity of heart and manner, a quiet prosperity, a nearer approach to the Arcadian idea of rural life, than anywhere else in this country. There are yet such places to be found in our island, notwithstanding the awful truth of what was said by Coleridge, that "Care, like a foul hag, sits on us all; one class presses with iron foot upon the wounded heads beneath, and all struggle for a worthless supremacy, and all, to rise to it, more shackled by their expenses."

But these are now few and far between; and they are certainly "nooks of the world," far from manufacturing towns; for my experience coincides with that of Captain Lloyd, as given in his "Field Sports of the North:"—"Manufactures, of whatever nature they may be, may certainly tend to enrich individuals, but, to my mind, they add little to the happiness of the community at large. In what parts of any country in the world are such scenes of vice and squalid misery to be witnessed, as in manufacturing districts?" What he adds is very true—that, though it may appear singular, yet it is a fact, that the farther we

retreat from great towns and manufactories, a greater degree of comfort is generally to be observed amongst the peasantry. It is, indeed, a strange relief to the spirit of one who has known something of the eager striving of the world, to come upon a spot where the inhabitants are passing through life, as it were, in a dream-like pilgrimage, half unconscious of its trials and evils—an existence which, if it have not the merit of great and triumphant virtue, has that absence of selfish cunning, pride, sorrow, and degradation, which one would seek for in vain amid more bustling scenes. To find the young, soberly and cheerfully fulfilling their daily duties—nowhere affluence, but everywhere plenty and comfort observable—and the old, in their last tranquil days, seated in their easy chairs, or on the stone bench at their doors, glad to chat with you on all they have known on earth and hope for in heaven—why, it would be more easy to scathe such a place with the evil spirit of the town, than to raise it in the scale of moral life. The experiment of improvement there, you feel, would be a hazardous one. It were easy and desirable to give more knowledge: but not easy to give it unaccompanied by those blighting contaminations that at present cling to it.

It is in those rural districts into which manufactories have spread—that are partly manufacturing and partly agricultural—that the population assumes its worst shape. The state of morals and manners amongst the working population of our great towns is terrible—far more so than casual observers are aware of. After all that has been done to reform and educate the working class, the torrent of corruption

rolls on. The most active friends of education, the most active labourers in it, are ready to despair, and sometimes exclaim—"What have we done, after all!" There, the spirit of man is aroused to a marvellous activity; but it is an unhealthful activity, and overpowers, in its extravagance, all attempts to direct it aright. "Evil communications corrupt good manners" faster than good communications can counteract them; and, where the rural population, in its simplicity, comes in contact with this spirit, it receives the contagion in its most exaggerated form—a desolating moral pestilence; and suffers in person and in mind. There, spread all the vice and baseness of the lowest grade of the town, made hideous by still greater vulgarity and ignorance, and unawed by the higher authorities, unchecked by the better influences which there prevail, in the example and exertions of a higher caste of society.

The Methodists have done much to check the progress of demoralization in these districts. They have given vast numbers education; they have taken them away from the pot-house and the gambling-house; from low haunts and low pursuits. They have placed them in a certain circle, and invested them with a degree of moral and social importance. They have placed them where they have a character to sustain, and higher objects to strive after; where they have ceased to be operated upon by a perpetual series of evil influences, and have been brought under the regular operation of good ones. They have rescued them from brutality of mind and manners, and given them a more refined association on earth, and a warm hope of a still better existence hereafter. If they

have not done all that could be desired, with such materials, they have done much, and the country owes them much. The thorough mastery of the evil requires the application of yet greater power — it requires a NATIONAL POWER. The evil lies deeper than the surface; it lies in the distorted nature of our social relations; and, *before the population can be effectually reformed, its condition must be physically ameliorated!*

There never was a more momentous and sure truth pronounced, than that pronounced by Christ—"They who take the sword, shall fall by the sword." If they do not fall by its edge, they will by its hilt. It is under this evil that we are now labouring. As a nation we have fallen, through war, into all our present misery and crime. It is impossible that the great European kingdoms, with their present wealth and cultivated surfaces, in their present artificial state of society, can carry on war without enduring evils far more extensive, tremendous, and lasting, than the mere ravaging of lands, the destruction of towns, or even of human lives. We are, as a nation, an awful proof of this at this moment. By the chances of war, at one time manufacturing and farming almost for the world; prospering, apparently, on the miseries of whole kingdoms wrapt in one wide scene of promiscuous carnage and anarchy, our tradesmen and agriculturists commanded their own terms; and hence, on the one hand, they accumulated large fortunes, while, on the other, the nation, by its enormous military preparations—its fleets and armies marching and sailing everywhere, prepared to meet emergencies at all points and in all climes; by its aids and subsidies

abroad; by its wasteful expenditure at home—piled up the most astounding debt ever heard of in the annals of the world. A vast working population was not merely demanded by this unnatural state of excitement, but might be said to be forced into existence, to supply all manner of articles to realms too busy in mutual slaughter to be able to manufacture or plough for themselves. Everything assumed a new and wonderful value. All classes, the working classes as well as the rest, with the apparent growing prosperity, advanced into habits of higher refinement and luxury. The tables of mechanics were heaped with loads of viands of the best quality, and of the highest price, as earliest in the market; their houses were crowded with furniture, till they themselves could scarcely turn round in them—clocks, sometimes two or three in one house; chests of drawers and tables thronged into the smallest rooms; looking-glasses, tea-trays, and prints, stuck on every possible space on the walls; and, from the ceiling depending hams, bags, baskets, fly-cages of many colours, and a miscellaneous congregation of other articles, that gave their abodes more the aspect of warerooms or museums, than the dwellings of the working class. Dress advanced in the same ratio; horses and gigs were in vast request; and the publicans and keepers of tea-gardens made ample fortunes.

The war ceased. Commerce was thrown open to the competition of the world. The Continental nations began to breathe, and to look round on their condition. Their poverty and their spirit of emulation, the sight of their own stripped condition, and of England apparently enriched beyond calculation at their expense, set them rapidly about helping themselves.

This could not but be quickly and deeply felt here. To maintain our position, all manner of artificial means were adopted. Every class, feeling the tide of wealth changing its course, strove to keep what it had got. The working class, as individually the weakest, because they had spent their gains as they came, went to the ground. The value of every necessary of life was kept up as much as possible by legal enactments. The rate of wages fell. The manufacturers, impelled by the same necessity of struggling for the maintenance of their rank, were plunged into the most eager competition; the utmost pressure of reduction fell on the labour of the operatives, who, with their acquired habits, were ill able to bear it. They were thrust down to a condition the most pitiful and morally destructive—to excessive labour, to semi-starvation, to pauperism. They could not send their children to school—not so much from the expense of schooling—for that was made light by public contribution, and new plans of facility in teaching large numbers—but because they wanted every penny their children could earn, by any means, to aid in the common support. Hence, mere infants were crowded in pestilent mills when they should have been growing in the fresh air, and were stunted and blighted in body and in mind—a system, the evil of which became so enormous as to call lately upon the attention of the legislature, and the indignant wonder of the nation. The parents themselves had not a moment's time to watch over their welfare or their morals; at least sixteen hours' unremitting daily labour being necessary to the most miserable existence. Evils accumulated on all sides. The working class considered themselves cast off from

the sympathies of the upper classes, regarded and valued but as tools and machines; their children grew into ignorant depravity, in spite of all efforts of law or philanthropy to prevent them. These causes still operate wherever manufacturing extends: and, till the condition of this great class, whether in towns or villages, can be amended; till time for domestic relaxation can be given to the man, and a Christian, rather than a literary, education to the boy—an inculcation of the beauty and necessity of the great Christian principles; the necessity of reverencing the laws of God; doing, in all their intercourse with their fellow men, as they would be done by; the necessity of purity of life and justice of action, rather than the cant of religious feeling, and the blind mystery of sectarian doctrine,—the law and the philanthropy must be in vain.

To the simple, and yet uncontaminated parts of the country, there is yet a different kind of education that I should rejoice to see extended. It should be, to open the eyes of the rural population to the advantages of their situation;—to awaken a taste for the enjoyment of nature;—to give them a touch of the poetical;—to teach them to see the pleasantness of their quiet lives,—of their cottages and gardens,—of the freshness of the air and country around them, especially as contrasted with the poor and squalid alleys where those of their own rank, living in towns, necessarily take up their abode,—of the advantages in point of health and purity afforded to their children by their position,—of the majestic beauty of the day, with its morning animation, its evening sunsets, and twilights almost as beautiful; its nightly blue altitude,

with its moon and stars:—all this might be readily done by the conversation of intelligent people, and by the diffusion of cheap publications amongst them; and done, too, without diminishing the relish for the daily business of their lives. Airy and dreamy notions—notions of false refinement, and aspirations of soaring beyond their own sphere—are not inspired by sound and good intelligence, but by defective and bad education.

The sort of education I mean has long been realized in Scotland, and with the happiest results. There, large towns and manufactories have produced their legitimate effect, as with us; but, in the rural districts, every child, by national provision, has a sound, plain education given him. He is brought up in habits of economy, and sentiments of rational religion, and the most solemn and thorough morality. The consequence is, that almost all grow up with a sense of self-respect; a sense of the dignity of human nature; a determined resolve of depending on their own exertions: and, though no people are so national, because they are made sensible of the beauty of their country, and the honourable deeds of their forefathers, yet, if they cannot find means of living at home without degradation, and, indeed, without bettering their condition, they soberly march off, and find some place where they can, though it be at the very ends of the earth.

Nothing is better known than the intelligence and order that distinguish a great portion of the rural population of Scotland. No people are more diligent and persevering in their proper avocations; and yet none are more alive to the delights of literature.

Amid wild mountain tracks and vast heaths, where you scarcely see a house as you pass along for miles, and where you could not have passed two generations ago without danger of robbery or the dirk, they have book societies, and send new books to and fro to one another, with an alacrity and punctuality that are most delightful. When I have been pedestrianizing in that country, I have frequently accosted men at their work, or in their working dress—perhaps with their axe or their spade in their hands, and three or four children at their heels—and found them well acquainted with the latest good publications, and entertaining the soundest notions of them, without the aid of critics. Such men in England would probably not have been able to read at all. They would have known nothing but the routine of their business, the state of the crop, and the gossip of the neighbourhood: but there, sturdy and laborious men, tanned with the sun, or smeared with the marl in which they had been delving, have not only been able to give all the knowledge of the district; its histories and traditions; the proprietorships, and other particulars of the neighbourhood; but their eyes have brightened at the mention of their great patriots, reformers, and philosophers, and their tongues have grown perfectly eloquent in discussing the works of their poets and other writers. The names of Wallace, Bruce, Knox, Fletcher of Saltoun, the Covenanters, Scott, Burns, Hogg, Campbell, Wilson, and others, have been spells that have made them march away miles with me, when they could not get me into their own houses, and find it difficult to turn back.

Now, why should not this be so in England?

Why should not similar means produce similar effects? They must and would; and by imbuing the rural population with a spirit as sound and rational, we should not only raise it in the social scale to a degree of worth and happiness at present not easily imaginable, but render the most important service to the country, by attaching "a bold peasantry, the country's pride," to their native soil by the most powerful of ties, and rendering them both able and more determined to live in honourable dependence on self-exertion. Book Societies, under local management, should do for the Country what Mechanics' Libraries are doing for the Towns—building up those habits, and perfecting those healthful tastes, for which popular education is but the bare foundation.

Wordsworth gives an account of the early years of his Wanderer, which, under such a system, might be that of thousands.

Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die:—
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts, there had no place; yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works through patience: hence he learned
In oft-recurring hours of sober thought
To look on nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned, where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.
So passed the time; yet to the nearest town
He daily went, with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book that most had tempted his desires,
While at the stall he read. Among the hills,

He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life,
His schoolmaster supplied; books that explain
The purer elements of truth, involved,
In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
(Especially perceived when nature droops,
And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
Busy in solitude and poverty.
Yet, still uppermost,
Nature was at his heart, as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
In all things that from her sweet influence
Might tend to wean him. Therefore, with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth,
While yet he lingered in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws:
His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag
That is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak
Familiar with forgotten years.
In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened, and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.

The Excursion, B. I.

Such a process I should rejoice to see producing such characters in England. Yes! Milton, Thomson, Cowper, the pious and tender Montgomery, and Bloomfield, one of their own kind, would be noble and enriching studies for the simplest cottage, and cottage-garden, and field-walk. Some of our condensed historians, our best essayists and divines, travellers, naturalists in a popular shape, and writers

of fiction, as Scott, and Edgeworth, and De Foe, might be with vast advantage diffused amongst them. Let us hope it will one day be so. And already I know some who have reaped those blessings of an awakened heart and intellect, too long denied to the hard path of poverty, and which render them not the less sedate, industrious, and provident, but, on the contrary, more so. They have made them, in the humblest of stations, the happiest of men; quickened their sensibilities towards their wives and children; converted the fields, the places of their daily toil, into places of earnest meditative delight—schools of perpetual observation of God's creative energy and wisdom.

It was but the other day that the farming-man of a neighbouring lady having been pointed out to me as at once remarkably fond of reading and attached to his profession, I entered into conversation with him; and it is long since I experienced such a cordial pleasure as in the contemplation of the character that opened upon me. He was a strong man; not to be distinguished by his dress and appearance from those of his class, but having a very intelligent countenance; and the vigorous, healthful feelings, and right views, that seemed to fill not only his mind but his whole frame, spoke volumes for that vast enjoyment and elevation of character which a rightly directed taste for reading would diffuse amongst our peasantry. His sound appreciation of those authors he had read —some of our best poets, historians, essayists, and travellers—was truly cheering, when contrasted with the miserable and frippery taste which distinguishes a large class of readers; where a-thousand-times-

repeated novels of fashionable life, neither original in conception nor of any worth in their object—the languid offspring of a tinsel and exotic existence—are read because they can be read without the labour of thinking. While such works are poured in legions upon the public, like a host of dead leaves from the forest, driven along in mimic life by a mighty wind—and while such things are suffered to swell the Puffiads of publishers, and shoulder away, or discourage, the substantial labours of high intellect—it is truly reviving to see the awakening of mind in the common people. It is, I am persuaded, from the people that a regenerating power must come—a new infusion of better blood into our literary system. The inanities of fashion must weary the spirit of a great nation, and be thrown off; strong, native genius, from the measureless, unploughed regions of the popular mind—robust, gigantic, uneffeminated by luxury, glitter, and sloth—will rise up, and put all soulless artificialities to shame; and already mighty are the symptoms of such a change manifested, in an array of names that might be adduced. But I must not be farther led away by this seducing topic.

I found this countryman was a member of our Artisans' Library, and every Saturday evening he walked over to the town to exchange his books. I asked him whether reading did not make him less satisfied with his daily work; his answer deserves universal attention:—"Before he read, his work was weary to him; for, in the solitary fields, an empty head measured the time out tediously, to double its length; but, now, no place was so sweet as the solitary fields: he had always something pleasant

floating across his mind; and the labour was delightful, and the day only too short." Seeing his ardent attachment to the country, I sent him the last edition of "The Book of the Seasons;" and I must here give a *verbatim et literatim* extract from the note in which he acknowledged its receipt, because it not only contains an experimental proof of the falsity of a common alarm on the subject of popular education, but shews at what a little cost much happiness may be conveyed to a poor man:—"Believe me, dear sir, this kind act has made an impression on my heart that time will not easily erase. There are none of your works, in my opinion, more valuable than this. The study of nature is not only the most delightful, but the most elevating. This will be true in *every station* of life. But how much more ought the *poor man* to prize this study! which if prized and pursued as it ought, will enable him to bear, with patient resignation and cheerfulness, the *lot* by providence assigned him. O Sir! I pity the working man who possesses not a *taste* for reading. 'Tis true, it may sometimes lead him to neglect the other more important duties of his station; but his better and more enlightened judgment will soon correct itself in this particular, and will enable him, while he steadily and diligently pursues his private studies, and participates in intellectual enjoyment, to prize, as he ought, his *character as a man* in every relative duty of life."

What a nation would this be, filled with a peasantry holding such views, and possessing such a consequent character as this!

The sources of enjoyment in nature have been too long closed to the poor. The rich can wander from

side to side of the island, and explore its coasts, its fields and forests—but the poor man is fettered to the spot. The rich can enter the galleries and exhibitions of cities, and contemplate all the great works of art; the poor *ought to be taught to know* that, if they cannot see the works of art—statues and paintings—they can see those of God,—if they cannot gaze on the finest forms of beauty from the chisel of the sculptor, they may be taught to distinguish the beauty of all *living* forms,—if they cannot behold splendid paintings of landscapes, of mountains, of sea-coasts, of sunrises and sunsets; they can see, one or other of them, all the originals of these—originals to whose magnificence and glory the copies never can approach. To the poor, but properly educated man, every walk will become a luxury, a poem, a painting—a source of the sweetest feelings and the most elevating reflections.

But there is one class in these back settlements of England to whom a liberal education is most requisite, and to whom it would be most difficult to give it—the class of smaller resident proprietors. The effect of the possession of property in such places is singular and most lamentable. It produces the most impenetrable hardness of nature—the most selfish and sordid dispositions. Everywhere, the tendency of accumulation is to generate selfishness: but, in towns, there are many counteracting influences; the emulative desire of vying, in mode of life, with equals and superiors—the greater spread of information—the various objects of pleasure and association, which keep open the avenues of expenditure, not only in the purse, but in the heart. Here there are none. Amusements and dissipations are self-gratulatingly de-

nounced as gross follies and sins; objects of display, as pride. The consequence is, that habits of the strangest parsimony prevail—the rudest furniture, the rudest style of living. Men who, in a town or its neighbourhood, would appear as gentlemen, and, perhaps, keep a carriage, there wear often clouted shoes, threadbare and patched clothes, and a hat not worth a farthing; and all in a fashion of the most awkward rusticity. All wisdom is supposed to lie in penuriousness. They have abundance of maxims for ever in their mouths, full of that philosophy; as "Penny-wise and pound-foolish"—"A penny saved is a penny got"—"A pin a-day 's a groat a-year." All ideas seem absorbed in the one grand idea of accumulating coin, that will never be of more value to them than so many oyster-shells. Such a thing as a noble or generous sentiment would be a surprise to their own souls. Of such men are made the hardest overseers of the poor; whose screwing, iron-handed administration of relief is the boast of the parish, and has led to the most monstrous abuses. To them all objects are alike; they have no discrimination; the old and young, the idle and industrious, the sturdy vagabond, and the helpless and dying!—they deem it a virtue to deny them all, till a higher power forces the reluctant doit from their gripe. They are surly, yet proud churls, living wrapped in a sense of their own importance; for they see nobody above them, except there be a squire or a lord in the parish; and they see little of him, and then only to make their passing obsequious bow; for they are at once

Tyrants to the weak, and cowards to the strong.

Any education, any change, would be a blessing to these men, that would bring them into collision with

those of their own supposed standing, but with better education and more liberal views and habits. The excess to which these causes operate in some of these out-of-the-world places, is scarcely to be credited: they produce the strangest scenes and the strangest characters. Let us take a specimen or two from one parish, that would be easily paralleled in many others.

In one part of this secluded neighbourhood, you approach extensive woods, and behold amongst them a house of corresponding air and dimensions—a mansion befitting a large landed proprietor. If you choose to explore the outbuildings belonging to it, you will find there a regularly educated and authorised physician, living in a dovecot, and writing prescriptions for any that choose to employ him, for a crown, or even half-a-crown, which he spends in drink. Paternal example and inculcations made him what he is; unfitted him for success in his profession, and left him dependent on his elder brother, who affords him the asylum of his dovecot, yet so grudgingly that he has even attempted to dislodge him by pulling off the roof; and the poor doctor owes his retreat, not to his brother's good-will, but to his own possession of a brace of formidable bull-dogs, that menace the destruction of any assailant. The dogs lie in his chamber when you enter, with their noses on the ground, and their dark glittering eyes fixed steadily upon you, and are ready, at a signal, to spring on you, and tear you to pieces. The doctor's free potations have now deprived him of the power of locomotion; he cannot quit his pigeon-house; but one of his bull-dogs he has trained to act as his emissary, and with a note suspended to his neck by a tape, he goes to certain houses in the neighbour-

ing village, and so communicates his wishes to certain cronies of his, who are in the habit of attending to them. The dog would tear any one to pieces that attempted to stop him while on his master's errands, being a very strong and fierce creature; but, if he is not molested, he goes very civilly along to his place of destination, and, when the note is taken off his neck by the proper hands, returns with great punctuality and decorum.

It must be said of this curiosity of a physician, that he is the descendant of a very curious family; whose history, for the last three generations, would be a regular series of eccentricities; and the first of whom, here resident, was a celebrated piratical captain, who is said to have come hither disguised as a peasant, seeking as secluded a country as he could find, and driving before him an ass loaded with gold. It is certain that he purchased very extensive estates, and that one of his descendants was a member of the last Parliament, who, partaking of the family qualities, excited more surprise and more laughter in the house, than, perhaps, any man since the days of Sir Thomas Lethbridge.

Not far thence, stands another residence. At some distance, it appears a goodly manor-house. It is large; with white walls and many antique gables; a stately avenue of elms in front; tall pines about it, the landmark of the whole country round: a spacious garden, with a summer-house on the wall, seeming to have been built when there was some taste there for those rural enjoyments which such a place is calculated to afford to the amiable, country-loving, and refined. As you come near, there appear signs of neglect and decay.

Old timber, litter, and large stones lie about; there are broken windows, unpainted and rotting woodwork: everything looks forlorn, as if it were the residence of poverty on the verge of utter destitution.

The fact is, the owner has landed property worth from thirty to forty thousand pounds. But see the man himself! There he goes, limping across his yard, having permanently injured one of his legs in some of his farming operations. There he goes—a tall, hard-featured, weather-beaten man, dressed in the garb of the most rustic husbandman: strong clouted ankle-boots, blue or black ribbed worsted stockings: corduroy small-clothes: a yellow striped waistcoat, and a coat of coarse grey cloth, cut short, in a rude fashion, and illustrated with metal buttons: a hat that seems to have been originally made of coarse wool, or dog's hair; to have cost some four-and-sixpence some dozen years ago—brown, threadbare, and cocked up behind, by propping on his coat collar.

He has brought up a family of three sons, and never spent on their education three pounds. The consequence has been just what might be expected. They came to know, as they grew up, "for quickly comes such knowledge," their expectations; and they turned out rude, savage, and drunken. One married a servant girl, and she dying, the son brought himself and several children to the old man's to live. Warned by this—for, with all his clownish parsimony, he has pride—the pride of property—he has put the others on farms, and they have married farmers' daughters: but, always living in expectation of the old man's death, they attend to no business; always looking forward to the possession of his wealth, they have already

condemned a good part of it. If any man could be punished, that man is, for sparing the expense of their education, and for the example set before them; for, what he has made the sole object of all his thoughts and labours, he sees them squandering, and knows that they will squander it all. But he himself is not guilty of all this; he is but the victim of his own education, and the maxims and manners of his ancestors. If he could have seen the usefulness of education to his sons, he could not have found in his heart to spend the necessary money; but he could not see it: anything further than to be able to sign a receipt, and reckon a sum of money in their heads, he called trash and nonsense.

When his sons were growing towards men, I have chanced to pass his farm-yard, and seen him and two of them filling a manure-cart; labouring, puffing and blowing, and perspiring, as if their lives depended on their labour; and the old man was urging them on with continual curses — "Curse thy body, Dick! Curse thy body, Ben!—Ben! Dick! Ben! Dick! work, lads, work!" And these hopeful sons were repaying their father's curses with the same horrible earnestness.

A gentleman once told me that, having to call on this man about some money transaction, he was detained till twelve o'clock, and desired to stay dinner, that being his hour. Out of curiosity, he consented. Everything about the house was in the rudest and most desolate state. I do not know whether they had a cloth spread on the sturdy oak table, which supported a set of pewter plates, a roasted fowl, and a pudding in a huge brown oaken dish. The wife,

stripped to her stays and quilted petticoat, was too busy making cheese and scolding the servants to come to dinner. The *pater familias* and his guest sat down together. As he cut up the fowl, the two great lads, Dick and Ben, then about twelve and fourteen years of age, came, with their wild eyes staring sharply out of their bushy heads of wild hair, and hung over their father's chair, one on each side, with an eager expression of voracity; for they were not asked to sit down. The father, as if he expected them to pounce on the dinner and carry it off, kept a sharp look-out on them; and though, out of deference to his guest, he restrained his curses, he kept vociferating, as he turned his head first to one and then to the other, and then gave a cut at the fowl—"Ben! Dick! get away, lads! get away! get away! get away!" But the moment a leg and a wing were cut off, the lads made a sudden spring, and each seizing a joint, bounded out of the apartment, leaving the old man in wonder at the unmanageableness of his sons. From such an education who can doubt the result?—a brood of savages, the nuisance of the neighbourhood, and torment of the old man's days. To such a height has the old man's agony arisen at times, as he saw the wasteful conduct of his sons, that it is a pretty well established fact, that on one occasion he threw himself down in a ditch in one of his own fields, and—did not pray to die, for he never knew the beginning, middle, or end of a prayer, but he *tried* to die; but, after a long and weary endeavour, finding it in vain, he got up and hobbled off home again, saying—"Well, I see it is as hard to die as to live. I can't die! I can't die! I must even bear it, till these lads kill me

by inches—and that must be a plaguy while first; for I measure two yards of bad stuff, and I think I'm as hard as a nur,* and as tough as whitleather."

Ben, now upwards of forty years of age, still lives with the old man, working as a labourer on his farm, and is maintained with his children. Money he never sees: but his father allows him to sell bundles of straw; and he may be seen, in an evening, with two bundles of straw under each arm, proceeding to the alehouse in the next village, where he barters them for the evening cup. Nay, the other night, a person encountered, as he supposed, a thief issuing from the old man's yard, with a huge beam on his shoulder. It was Ben, going to turn it into ale; who desired his neighbour to say nothing. Nothing can more strikingly close this account than the old man's usual description of his three sons. "My son Dick has Cain's mark on his forehead; Ben, if ale was a guinea a-pint, and he had but one guinea in the world, would buy a pint of ale; and, as for Simon—he is a gentleman! He takes a certificate to shoot. He runs with those long legs of his over three parishes, and comes slinging home with a crow, or a pinet*—ay ay, Simon is a gentleman!"

In this same nook of the world might be seen, some years ago, two brothers, stout farmers—farmers of their own property—heaping curses and recriminations on each other about their possessions, in so loud a voice that they have been heard half a mile off. This enmity outlasted the elder, and burned in the breast of the younger for years after. For it was

* Nur—a hard knot of wood used by boys at bandy instead of a ball.

† Magpie.

some years after, that he attended the funeral of a niece whom he left through life to the charity of another. When the funeral was over, they adjourned with the parson to the public-house; and here the person who had cared for the neglected niece, urged the uncle now to pay some part of the funeral charges. "Yes," said he, "thou hast been at a deal of cost," (these country people still retain the use of thou and thee), "and here is a sixpence for the parson's glass of brandy and water." The astonished man pushed back the sixpence with contempt; but, at this moment, in came a lad to tell them that the grave being made too near that of the deceased brother, the earth had suddenly fallen in, and broken in the lid of the old man's coffin. At this, the living brother started up in evident delight and exclaimed—"Why, has it? Why, has it? Thou tells me summut, lad! thou tells me summut!" And he gave him the sixpence he had generously destined for the parson's glass.

A scene, described to me by a professional land-agent, would seem to belong to the generation of Parson Adams and Squire Western, but it actually occurred but the other day, and only seven miles from one of our largest county towns. This land-agent was sent for on business by an old gentleman of large landed estate in that county. As the gentleman's house was in a secluded situation, off the highways, and it was a fine, cool, autumnal day, he took a foot-path which led the whole way across delightful fields, and after enjoying his walk through meadows and woods, arrived at the Hall with a most vigorous appetite, just as the squire and his housekeeper were sitting down to dinner. Of course,

nothing less could take place than an invitation for him to join them; which he was not in the disposition by any means to decline. I need scarcely say that the fact of the squire and his house-keeper sitting at the same table indicates the ancient gentleman as one of the real old school. He was, in fact, a tall, gaunt, meagre old fellow, whose sole pleasure was putting out his rents on good security, and whose sole family consisted of his house-keeper and one old amphibious animal, who, if he had as many heads as occupations, would have carried at least four more than Janus—occupying his talents, as he did, as gardener, groom, serving-man, and three or four other personages. The whole house and everything about it bore amplest marks of neglect and antiquity. Not a gate, or a door, or a window, or a carpet, or any other piece of furniture, but was just as his father left it fifty years before, except for the work which time, and such tying and patching as were absolutely needful to keep certain things together, had done. Our agent looked with some curiosity at the two covers on the table before them, which being removed revealed a single partridge and three potatoes. The house-keeper having cut the partridge into quarters, gave each of the gentlemen one, and took the third herself. Our worthy land-agent supposing this to be but a slight first course, was astounded to hear the squire say, he hoped Mr. Mapleton would make a dinner—for he saw what there was! On this significant hint Mr. Mapleton made haste to dispatch his quarter of bird, and cast eager looks on the remaining quarter in the dish. The house-keeper, indeed, was just proceeding to extend the knife and fork towards

it, saying, perhaps Mr. Mapleton would take the other quarter, when the old gentleman said very smartly; "Don't urge Mr. Mapleton unpleasantly—don't overdo him—I dare say he knows when he has had enough, without so much teasing. I have made an excellent dinner indeed!"

Hereupon the house-keeper's arms and weapons were drawn back abruptly; the old gentleman rang the bell, and the shuffling old serving-man entered and cleared all away. As the cloth and the house-keeper disappeared, the squire also opened a tall cupboard on one side of the fire-place, and Mr. Mapleton began to please his fancy with a forthcoming apparition of wine. Having sate, however, sometime, and hearing from behind the tall door, which was drawn partly after the old squire so as to conceal him, certain sounds as of decanting liquor, and as of a knife coming in contact with a plate, sounds particularly familiar and exciting to hungry ears, he contrived to lean back so far in his chair as to catch a view of the tall figure of the squire standing with a large plum-cake upon the shelf before him, into which he had made a capacious incision, and a glass of wine, moreover, at a little distance. This discovery naturally making our land-agent extremely restless, he began to indicate his presence by sundry hems, shuffles, coughs, and drummings on his chair, which immediately produced this consequence. The old squire's head protruded from behind the cupboard door with an inquiring look; and finding the eyes of Mr. Mapleton as inquiringly fixed on him, he said—"Mr. Mapleton, will you take a glass of wine?" "Certainly, Sir, with the greatest pleasure." The wine

was carefully poured out; making various cluckings, or sobbings in the throat of the bottle as very loath to leave it, and was set on the table before Mr. Mapleton. No invitation, however, to a participation of the cake came; and after sitting perhaps a quarter of an hour longer, listening to the same inviting sounds of scraping plate and decantation, he was compelled again to shuffle, hem, and drum. This had a similar happy effect to the former attempt;—out popped the squire's head with a—"Would you take another glass Mr. Mapleton?" "Certainly, Sir, with the greatest pleasure, I feel thirsty with my walk." The bottle was produced, and the glass filled, but to put an end to any further intimations of thirst, the door was instantly closed, the key dropped into the squire's capacious pocket, and the old gentleman forthwith entered upon business, which, in fact, concerned thousands of pounds.

Before closing this gallery of country oddities, I must say that, in some instances, much goodness of heart is mixed up with this wild growth of queerness. There are very many who will know of whom I am speaking, when I say that there was in the last generation a gentleman in one of the midland counties who was affected with this singular species of monomania: at every execution at the county town he purchased the rope or ropes of Jack Ketch. These ropes, duly labelled with the name of the culprit, the date of his execution, and the crime for which he suffered, were hung round a particular room. On one occasion, arriving at the town and being told that the criminal was reprieved, he exclaimed—"Gracious Heavens, then I have lost my rope!" The son of

this gentleman still displays a good deal of hereditary eccentricity, but has destroyed these ropes. Nevertheless, I am told, that the carving-knife used in his kitchen is the very sword with which Lord Byron killed Chaworth. He still lives in the same house, and, old bachelor as he is, maintains the old English style and hospitality in a degree not often to be witnessed now. His personal appearance is unique. He is tall, with a ruddy countenance, with white whiskers, white waistcoat, white breeches, and white lining to his coat. He always appears most scrupulously and delicately clean. His estate is large; and whoever goes to his house on business, finds bread and cheese and ale set before him. His house-keeper is said to receive no regular wages, but every now and then a fifty pound note is put into her hands, so that she has grown tolerably rich. It is a standing order in the house, that every poor person, come whence he may, who has lost a cow, and is seeking to get another, shall receive a sovereign. I have heard a gentleman say, who knows him well, that his benevolence, particularly to young tradesmen, is most extraordinary: and that being himself once supposed to be on his death-bed, this worthy man came, sate down by him, cried like a child, and told him, if he had not provided for his children just as he wished, that he had only to tell him what he would have done, and then and there it should be done. No relationship whatever existed; and this noble offer was not accepted. The same gentleman told me that it is the regular habit of this worthy example of Old English simplicity and goodness of heart, every evening before he retires to rest, to sit quietly for a certain time in

his easy chair, endeavouring to discover whether he has done anything wrong during the day, or has possibly hurt any one's feelings; and if he fancies he has, he hastens the next morning to set all right. It is delightful to have to record proofs of the yet existing spirit of ancient hospitality and simple worth of character.

In conclusion,—let me observe that some of the foregoing cases are shocking ones; but they are only too true; and such are but the events of every day in those sleepy hollows, where public opinion has no weight, and where ignorance and avarice are handed down from age to age. I have seen hundreds of such things in such places. And what mode of regeneration shall reach this class of people, who have the rust of whole ages in their souls? You cannot offer to them education, as you do to the poor. You cannot reason with them, as with the poor. They have too much pride. It can only be by educating all around them, that you can reach them. When they feel the effect of the education of the poor, their pride will compel them to educate their children. This will be one of the many good results that will flow from the education of the poor in the back settlements of England. Let us, then, direct the stream of knowledge into the remotest of these obscure places. If the penny periodicals were, by some means, made to circulate there, as they circulate in towns—the *Penny Magazine*, and *Saturday Magazine*, with their host of wood-cuts and useful facts; and *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, with its more refined and poetical spirit—they would work a great change. Prints and cuts from good originals would

awaken a better taste; higher ideas of the beauty of created forms: for I say with Rogers—

> Be mine to bless the mere mechanic skill
> That stamps, renews, and multiplies at will;
> And cheaply circulates through distant climes,
> The fairest relics of the purest times.

We blame our populace for not possessing the same refined taste as the French and Italians; for being brutal and destructive; that parks, public walks, and public buildings, cannot be thrown open to them without receiving injury. We ought not to blame them for this; for is not this the *English spirit* that has been praised in Parliament? for the encouragement of which, bull-baitings, dog-fightings, cock-fightings, and boxings have been pleaded for by senators, as its proper aliment? and the Romans, with their gladiatorial shows, quoted as good precedents? Forgetting that while the Romans were a growing and a conquering people, they were a simple and domestic people. When they had their amphitheatres and their bloody shows of battling men and beasts, they fell under imperial despotism, and thence into national destruction. If we will have a better spirit, we must take better means to produce it. We can never make our rural population too well informed. Ireland, with all manner of horrible outrages, England with its rick-burnings, and Scotland with its orderly peasantry, all point towards the evils of ignorance and oppression, and the national advantage and individual happiness that are to be reaped from the spread of sound knowledge through our rural districts.

CHAPTER III.

NOOKS OF THE WORLD:—LIFE IN THE DALES OF LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE.

The nooks of the world which we visited in our last chapter lay in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire; we will now change the scene a little northward. Such secluded and original spots we might indeed readily undertake to discover in almost every county of England; but I can only give a few specimens from the great whole, and leave every one to look about him for the rest. Lancashire is famous for its immense manufactures, and consequent immense population. In ranging over its wild, bleak hills, we are

presently made sensible of the vast difference between the character and habits of the working class, and the character and habits of the pastoral and agricultural districts. We have no longer those picturesque villages and cottages half buried in their garden and orchard trees; no longer those home-crofts, with their old, tall hedges; no longer rows of bee-hives beneath their little thatched southern sheds; those rich fields and farm-houses, surrounded with wealth of corn-ricks, and herds and flocks. You have no longer that quiet and Arcadian-looking population; hedgers and ditchers, ploughmen and substantial farmers, who seem to keep through life the "peaceful tenor of their way," in old-English fulness and content. There may indeed, and there are, such people scattered here and there; but they and their abodes are not of the class which gives the predominant character to the scenery. On the contrary, everywhere extend wild naked hills, in many places totally unreclaimed; in others, enclosed, but exhibiting all the signs of a neglected and spiritless husbandry; with stunted fences or stone walls; and fields sodden with wet from want of drainage, and consequently over-grown with rushes. Over these naked and desolate hills are scattered to their very tops, in all directions, the habitations of a swarming population of weavers; the people and their houses equally unparticipant of those features which delight the poet and the painter. The houses are erections of stone or brick, covered with glaring red tiles, as free from any attempt at beauty or ornament as possible. Without, where they have gardens, those gardens are as miserable and neglected as the fields; within, they are squalid and comfortless.

In some of these swarming villages, ay, and in the cottages of the large manufacturing towns too, you can scarcely see a window with whole panes of glass. In one house in the outskirts of Blackburn, and that too, an ale-house, we counted in a window of sixty panes, eight-and-forty broken ones; and this window was of a pretty uniform character with its fellows, both in that house, and the neighbouring ones. It is not possible to conceive a more violent and melancholy contrast than that which the filth, the poverty, and forlornness of these weavers' and spinners' dwellings form to the neatness, comfort, and loveliness of the cottages of the peasantry in many other parts of the kingdom. Any man who had once been through this district, might again recognize the locality if he were taken thither blindfold, by the very smell of oatcake, which floats about the villages, and the sound of the shuttles with their eternal "latitat! latitat!" I ranged wide over the bleak hills in the neighbourhood of Padiham, Belthorne, Guide, and such places, and the numbers and aspect of the population filled me with astonishment. Through the long miserable streets of those villages, children and dogs were thick as motes in the sun. The boys and men with their hair shorn off, as with a pair of wool-shears, close to their heads, till it stood up staring and bristly, and yet left hanging long over their eyes, till it gave them a most villanous and hangman look. What makes those rough heads more conspicuous, is their being so frequently red; the testimony of nature to the ancient prevalence of the Dane on these hills. The men are besides long and bony; the women often of stalwart and masculine figure, and of a hardness of feature

which gives them no claims to be ranked amongst the most dangerous of the "Lancashire witches." Everywhere the rudeness of the rising generation is wonderful. Everywhere the stare of mingled ignorance and insolence meets you; everywhere a troop of lads is at your heels, with the clatter of their wooden clogs, crying—"Fellee, gies a hawpenny!"

In one village, and that too the celebrated Roman station of Ribchester, our chaise was pursued by swarms of these wooden-shod lads, like swarms of flies, that were only beaten off for a moment to close in upon you again, and their sisters showed equally the extravagance of rudeness in which they were suffered to grow up, by running out of the houses as we passed, and poking mops and brushes at the horses' heads. No one attempted to restrain or rebuke them, and yet what was odd enough, not one of the adult population offered you the least insult, but if you asked the way, gave you the most ready directions, and if you went into their houses, treated you with perfect civility, and showed an affection for these wild brats that was honourable to their hearts, and wanted only directing by a better intelligence. The uncouthness of these poor people is not that of evil disposition, but of pressing poverty and continued neglect. As is generally the case, in the poorest houses were the largest families. Ten and eleven children in one small dirty hovel was no uncommon sight, actually covering the very floor till there seemed scarce room to sit down; and amid this crowd, the mother was generally busy washing, or baking oat-cakes; and the father making the place resound with the "latitat, latitat" of his shuttle. One did not

wonder, seeing this, that the poor creatures are glad to turn out the whole troop of children to play on the hills, the elder girls lugging the babies along with them.

The wildness into which some of these children in the more solitary parts of the country grow is, I imagine, not to be surpassed in any of the back settlements of America. On July 5th of last year, the day of that remarkable thunder-storm, which visited a great part of the kingdom with such fury, being driven into a cottage at the foot of Pendle by the coming on of this storm, and while standing at the door watching its progress, I observed the head of some human creature carefully protruded from the doorway of an adjoining shed, and as suddenly withdrawn on being observed. To ascertain what sort of person it belonged to, I went into the shed, but at first found it too dark to allow me to discover any thing. Presently, however, as objects became visible, I saw a little creature, apparently a girl of ten years old, reared very erectly against the opposite wall. On accosting her in a kind tone, and telling her to come forward, and not to be afraid, she advanced from the wall, and behold! there stood another little creature about the head shorter, whom she had been concealing. I asked the elder child whether this younger one was a girl. She answered—"Ne-a." "Was it a boy?" "Ne-a." "What! neither boy nor girl! was she herself a girl?" "Ne-a." "What was it a boy that I was speaking to?" "Ne-a." "What in the name of wonder were they then?" "We are childer." "Childer! and was the woman in the house their mother?" "Ne-a." "Who was she then?" "Ar Mam." "O! your mam! and do

you keep cows in this shed?" "Ne-a." "What then?" "Bee-as." In short, common English was quite unintelligible to these little creatures, and their appearance was as wild as their speech. They were two fine young creatures, nevertheless, especially the elder, whose form and face were full of that symmetry and free grace that are sometimes the growth of unrestrained nature, and would have delighted the sculptor or the painter. Their only clothing was a sort of little boddice with skirts, made of a reddish stuff, and rendered more picturesque by sundry patches of scarlet cloth, no doubt from their mother's old cloak. Their heads, bosoms, and legs to the knees were bare to all the influences of earth and heaven; and on giving them each a penny, they bounded away with the fleetness and elasticity of young roes. No doubt, the hills and the heaths, the wild flowers of summer and the swift waters of the glens were the only live-long day companions of these children, who came home only to their oatmeal dinner, and a bed as simple as their garments. Imagine the violent change of life, by the sudden capture and confinement of these little English savages, in the night and day noise, labour, and foul atmosphere of the cotton purgatories!

In the immediate neighbourhood of towns, many of the swelling ranges of hills present a much more cultivated aspect, and delight the eye with their smooth, green, and flowing outlines; and the valleys almost everywhere, are woody, watered with clear rapid streams, and, in short, are beautiful. But along these rise up the tall chimneys of vast and innumerable factories, and even while looking on the palaces of the master manufacturers, with their woods, and gardens,

and shrubbery lawns around them, one cannot help thinking of all the horrors detailed before the Committees of the House of Commons respecting the Factory System; of the parentless and friendless little wretches, sent by wagon loads from distant workhouses to these prisons of labour and despair; of the young frames crushed to the dust by incessant labour; of the beds into which one set of children got, as another set got out, so that they were said never to be cold the whole year round, till contagious fevers burst out and swept away by hundreds these little victims of Mammon's over-urging, never-ceasing wheel. Beautiful as are many of those wild glens and recesses where, before the introduction of steam, the dashing rivulet invited the cotton spinners to erect their mills; and curious as the remains of those simple original factories are, with their one great water-wheel, which turned their spindles while there was water, but during the drought of summer quite as often stood still; yet one is haunted even there, amongst the shadows of fine old trees that throw their arms athwart streams dashing down their beds of solid rock, by the memory of little tender children who never knew pity or kindness, but laboured on and on, through noon and through midnight, till they slept and yet mechanically worked, and were often awaked only by the horrid machinery rending off their little limbs. In places like these, where now the old factories, and the large houses of the proprietors stand deserted, or are inhabited by troops of poor creatures whose poverty makes them only appear the more desolate, we are told by such men as Mr. Fielden of Oldham, once a factory child himself and

now a great manufacturer, who dares to reveal the secrets of the prison-house, that little creatures have even committed suicide to escape from a life worse than ten deaths. And what a mighty system is this now become! What a perpetual and vast supply of human life and energy it requires, with all the facilities of improved machinery, with all the developed power of steam, and with all the growing thirst of wealth to urge it on! We are told that the state of the factories, and the children employed in them is greatly improved; and I trust they are; but if there be any truth in the evidence given before the parliamentary committees, there is need of great amelioration yet; and it is when we recollect these things, how completely the labouring class has, in these districts, been regarded as mere machinery for the accumulation of enormous capitals, that we cease to wonder at their uncouth and degraded aspect, and at the neglect in which they are suffered to swarm over these hills,—like the very weeds of humanity, cast out into disregarded places, and left to spread and increase in rank and deleterious luxuriance. The numbers of drunken men that you meet in these districts in an evening, and the numbers of *women* that you see seated with their ale-pots and pipes round the ale-house fires, a sight hardly elsewhere to be witnessed, form a striking contrast to the state of things in the agricultural districts, such as Craven, where you may pass through half-a-dozen villages and not find one pot-house.

It was necessary to take a glimpse at these Lancashire hills in reviewing the rural life of England; let us now pass into a tract of the country which

borders immediately upon them, and yet is so totally unlike in its aspect and population. We shall now penetrate into perhaps the most perfect nook of the world that England holds. The Yorkshire dales are known to most by name, but to comparatively few by actual visitation. They lie amongst that wild tract of hills which stretch along the West Riding of Yorkshire, from Lancashire to Westmoreland, and form part, in fact, of the great mountainous chain which runs from Derbyshire through these counties and Cumberland into Scotland. Some of these hills are of great bulk and considerable altitude. The old rhymes are well known of

> Ingleborough, Pendle, and Pennegent
> Are the highest hills betwixt Scotland and Trent;

and,

> Pendle, Pennegent, and Ingleborough
> Are the highest hills all England thorough.

The Yorkshire dales stretch from the foot of Ingleborough north-east and west, over a considerable space of country. It is a wild, and, in many parts, a dreary region. Long ridges of hills covered with black heath, or bare stone,—with stony wastes at their feet of the grimmest and most time-worn character. All round Ingleborough the whole country seems to have been so tossed, shaken, and undermined by the violence which at some period broke it up into its present character, that its whole subterranean space seems to be filled with caves and passages for winds and waters that possess a remarkable connexion one with another, and present a multitude of singular phenomena. On the Craven side lie those celebrated spots Malham Cove and Gordale Scar, well known to

tourists; the one, a splendid range of precipice with a river issusing from its base, the other, Gordale Scar, one of the most solemnly impressive of nature's works. It is that of a river which has torn its way from the top of a mountain, through a rugged descent in the solid rock, and falls into a sort of cove surrounded by lofty precipices, which make such a gloom that on looking up, the stars are said sometimes to be seen at noon. Amongst all the magnificent scenes which the mountainous parts of these kingdoms present, I never visited one which impressed me with so much awe and wonder as this. You approach it by no regular road; you have even to ask permission to pass through the yard of a farm-house, to get at it; and your way is then up a valley, along which come two or three streams, running on with a wild beauty and abundance that occupy and delight your attention. Suddenly, you pass round a rock, and find yourself in this solemn cove, the high grey cliffs towering above you on all sides, the water dropping from their summits in a silver rain, and before you a river descending from a cleft in the mountain, and falling, as it were, over a screen, and spreading in white foam over it in a solemn and yet riotous beauty. This screen is formed of the calcareous deposit of the water; and crossing the stream by the stones which lie in it, you may mount from the greensward which carpets the bottom of the cove, climb up this screen, and ascend along the side of the falling torrent, up one of the most wild and desolate ravines, till you issue on the mountain top, where the mountain cistus and the crimson geranium wave their lovely flowers in the breeze.

These scenes lie on the Craven side of Ingle-

borough, and as you wind round his feet, though distantly, by Settle, to the dales, your way is still amongst the loftiest fells, and past continual proofs of subterranean agency, and agency of past violence. You are scarcely past Settle, when by the road-side you see a trough overflowing with the most beautifully transparent water. You stop to look at it, and it shrinks before your eyes six or seven inches, perhaps, below the edge of the trough, and then again comes gushing and flowing over. As you advance, the very names of places that lie in view speak of a wild region, and have something of the old British or Danish character in them. To your left shine the waters distantly of Lancaster Sounds, and Morecombe Bay, and around you are the Great Stone of Four Stones, the Cross of Grete, Yorda's Cave, that is, the cave of Yorda, the Danish sorceress; Weathercote Cave, and Hurtle-pot and Gingle-pot. Our progress over this ground, though early in July, was amid clouds, wind and rain. The black heights of Ingleborough were only visible at intervals through the rolling rack, and all about Weathercote Cave, Hurtle-pot and Gingle-pot were traces of the violence of outbursting waters. We found a capital inn nearly opposite the Weathercote Cave, where one of the tallest of imaginable women presented us with a lunch of country fare,—oat-cake, cheese, and porter, and laid our cloaks and great-coats to dry while we visited the Cave and the Pots. Weathercote Cave, is not, as the imagination would naturally suggest to any one, a cave in the side of a hill or precipice, but a savage chasm in the ground, in which you hear the thunder of falling waters. It is just such a place as

one dreams of in ancient Thessaly, haunted by Pan and the Satyrs. When you come to the brink of this fearful chasm, which is overhung with trees and bushes, you perceive a torrent falling in a column of white foam, and with a thundering din, into a deep abyss. Down to the bottom of this abyss there is a sloping descent, amongst loose and slippery stones. When you reach the bottom, a cavern opens on your left, into which you may pass, so as to avoid the mass of falling water, which is dashed upon a large black stone, and then is absorbed by some unseen channel. The huge blocks of stone which lie in this cave appear black and shining as polished ebony. I suppose this chasm is at least a hundred feet deep, and yet a few days before we were there, it had been filled to overflowing with water, which had rushed from its mouth with such violence as to rend down large trees around it. What is still more remarkable, at a few hundred yards distance is another chasm of equal depth, and of perpendicular descent, whence the torrents swallowed by the Weathercote Cave during great rains are again ejected with incredible violence. This had taken place, as we have said, a few days before our visit, and though this gulph was now dry again, the evidences of its fury were all around us. Wagon loads of stones lay at its mouth, which had been hurled up with the torrent of water, all churned or hurtled (whence its name of Hurtle-pot) by its violence into the roundness of pebbles; and trees were laid prostrate, with their branches crushed into fragments, in the track by which the waters had escaped. This track was towards the third singular abyss—Gingle-pot. This gulph had a wider and more sloping

mouth than the other, so that you could descend a considerable depth into it, but there you found a black and sullen water, which the people say has never been fathomed. It is said to contain a species of black trout, which are caught, we were told, by approaching the surface of the water with lighted torches by night, towards which they rise. Several country fellows were amusing themselves as we approached with rolling large stones into the abyss, which certainly sunk into the water with an awful sound.

Such is the region which abuts upon the Yorkshire dales. The dales themselves are the intervening spaces betwixt high fells, which run in long ranges one beyond another in a numerous succession. Some of these dales possess a considerable breadth of meadow land, as Wensley-dale, but the far greater number have scarcely more room in the bottom than is occupied by the stream and the public road. Thus every dale seems a little world in itself, being shut in by its high ranges of fell. If you ascend to the ridge of one of these, you find another dale, lying at your feet, with its own little community; were you to cross to the next ridge, you would find another, and so on, far and wide. It is a land of alternating ridge and hollow, ridge and hollow, or in the language of the district, fell and dale, without any intervention of champaign country. Wordsworth's description in Peter Bell, shows that the poet had been there, as well as the potter.

> And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
> Among the rocks and winding scars;
> Where deep and low the hamlets lie,
> Beneath their little patch of sky,
> And little lot of stars.

Formerly, when there were no roads into these secluded dales, except some shingly ravine, down which the pedestrian, or one of their native ponies could with considerable caution, and sundry strikings of the foot against loose stones, descend, few, except the inhabitants themselves could visit them, and they then must have possessed a primitive character indeed. Now, however, good roads run through them, and a greater intercourse with the surrounding country must have had its effect, yet I know no other corner of England where still linger so patriarchal a character and such peculiar habits.

George Fox, in his travels far and wide through the realm to promulgate his doctrines, penetrated into these dales. From the top of Pendle-hill in Lancashire, where there is an immense prospect, he tells us in his journal, that he had a vision of the triumphs of his ministry, and of the thousands that would be converted to his peculiar faith. Descending in the strength of this revelation, he marched northward, and speedily found in these dales a primitive race, ready to adopt his opinions and practices, so congenial to a simple and earnest-hearted people. There he repeatedly came, and sojourned long; and the accounts of the extraordinary meetings held, and the effect produced, have few parallels in the histories of religious reformers. There is a little church-of-England chapel perched on the highest point of Kendal Fells, not far from Sedburgh, which is in the outskirts of this district, called Firbank Chapel, where a thousand people are said to have been collected to hear him, and at which three hundred people were convinced of the truth, to use his own words, at one

time. That little chapel is standing yet, perhaps the very humblest fabric in England belonging to the Established Church, old and dilapidated, and situated in one of the most singular and wild situations. Near the door is a rock, on which, it is said, he stood to preach. From its high site you look around over dreary moors, and a vast tract of outstretched country, and wonder whence the people gathered to his ministry. But his fame was that of an apostle all round this country. In Sedburgh churchyard stand two yew trees, under the shade of which, he, on one occasion preached, drawing all the people out of the church to him. Within the dales themselves he planted several meetings, at Aysgarth, Counterside, and Laygate. These meetings still remain, and a considerable number of Friends are scattered through the dales, of a primitive and hospitable character. We went, on the only Sunday which we passed in the dales, to his favourite meeting of Counterside, and could almost have imagined that the remarkable times of his ministry were yet remaining. We found the meeting situated amid a cluster of rustic cottages in pleasant Simmerdale, by Simmerdale Water. The house in which he usually lived during his visits to this valley adjoined the meeting; a true old-fashioned house, where the remains of his oaken bedstead were still preserved; and a very handsome one it must have been, and far too much adorned with the vanity of carving for so plain a man, and so homely a place. But the people were flocking from all sides, down the fells, along the dales to the meeting, not only the Friends themselves, but the other dalespeople; and we found Mr. Joseph Pease, brother

of the M.P., and his lady, from Darlington, addressing a crowded audience. The old times of Fox seemed indeed returned. The preacher's discourse was one of an earnest and affectionate eloquence, and the audience was of a most simple and unworldly character. Almost every person, man or woman, had a nosegay in hand; nosegays in truth, for they very liberally and repeatedly applied them to the organ whence they are named. The herbs, for they consisted rather of herbs than flowers, were as singular as the appearance of such a host of nosegays itself. Not one of them was without a piece of southernwood, in some instances almost amounting to a bush, and evidently there entitled to its ancient name, "lads'-love and lasses'-delight." With this was grasped in many a hardy hand, thyme, and ailcost, and in many, mint! No doubt the pungent qualities of these herbs are found very useful stimulants in close and crowded places of worship, and especially under a drowsy preacher, by those whose occupations for the other six days lie chiefly out-of-doors, in the keen air of hills and moors. That such is the object of them was sufficiently indicated by a poor woman who offered us a little bunch of these herbs as we entered the meeting-house, saying with a smile, "they are so reviving."

Amongst the Friends, are a considerable number of substantial people, who lead here a sort of patriarchal life, with their flocks and herds on the hills around them. And their houses, placed on the slope of the hills, yet not far above the level of the valley, with their ample gardens, must be in the summer months most agreeable abodes. Old English hos-

pitality and kindness are found here in all their strength. We called on several of the resident proprietors, and amongst others Mr. William Fothergill, at Carr-End. The garden of this gentleman was a perfect Paradise of roses. But the fine old intellectual man himself, retaining beyond his eightieth year, and in this secluded place, all the enthusiasm of youth, the love of books, and aspirations after the spread of knowledge and freedom through the world, was a still more attractive object. He is the descendant of two well-known men, Dr. Fothergill, and Samuel Fothergill, an eminent minister in this society. Talent and liberality of sentiment seem a congenial growth of these dales, for the able and noble-minded Adam Sedgwick is a native of one of them.

To that valley, the beautiful dale of Dent, we may as well betake ourselves, for in describing these retired regions, one portion may with great propriety be taken as a specimen of the whole. Descending therefore from the moors at Newby-Head, we found this southern entrance of Dent-dale steep and narrow. As we proceeded, it wound on before us for several miles, till we beheld the village of Dent lying at its northern extremity. Dent's-Town, as they call it, has a very Swiss look, with its projecting roofs, and open galleries ascended by steps from the outside. But what strikes you with most surprise in this dale is its high state of cultivation. All the lower part of the dale is divided into small enclosures, rich with grass and summer flowers, and beautifully wooded; and amid the orchards and gardens, peep out houses of various sizes and characters. The hills nearly meet at the bottom, and ascend high, in two long ranges. The upper

part, above the enclosures appears, in some parts, black with heath, but more generally smooth and green, and dotted all over with flocks of sheep and geese. On the wilder parts of these hills graze a great number of cattle, and a shaggy race of ponies, peculiar to them, with coats and manes long, and bleached by the wintry winds, till they look at a distance, more like wild bisons than horses. These dun ponies, before the progress of enclosure, used sometimes to follow the tops of the hills right away into Scotland, and have been fetched back from a distance of two hundred miles. When they have shed their wintry coats, and ceased to have such a look

As of the dwellers out of doors;

they often turn out very beautiful creatures, remarkably sure-footed, and highly prized for drawing in ladies' pony-carriages. But we must descend into the valley: and here one of the most remarkable features is the river. It has all the character of a mountain torrent; huge stones, and masses of gravel everywhere demonstrating the occasional violence of the waters. But what has the most singular effect, its bed is one of solid stone, in some parts black or dark-grey marble, which is chafed and worn by the fury of the stream in floods, in such a manner that it looks itself like a rushing, billowy river, petrified by enchantment. A great part of this bed during the summer is dry, and therefore the more remarkable in its aspect. Here and there you may walk along it for a considerable distance; then again it descends in precipices, and amid blocks of stone of a gigantic character. One of these places is known by the name of Hell's Cauldron, no doubt in rainy seasons a most appropriate name; for

the river here, overhung with dark masses of trees, falls over some huge steps of the stony bed into a deep and black abyss, where the rending of the rocks and washing up of heaps of debris, shew with what fury that cauldron boils. But what are still more significant of this fury, are the hollows worn into the very mass of the ledges of rocks over which it passes, one of which, overlooking the abyss, is called the Pulpit, from its form, and in which you may stand. These hollows, which are scooped out with wonderful regularity, appear to be made by the churning and grinding of stones, which get in wherever the softer parts of the rocks give way to the action of the floods. Yet fearful as this Hell's Cauldron must be when the stream is swollen, we were told that a boy once slipped in, and was carried through it, and washed up on the bank below, unhurt;—calling out to his astounded companions—"Here am I! where are you?" The public road runs along the side of the stream, down the valley. This stream is crossed by two queer little foot-bridges, called by the odd names of Tummy and Nelly, or Tummy-Brig, and Nelly-Brig, having been built by two persons of these familiar names, to accommodate the inhabitants of the opposite sides of the dale. And truly, as will be shortly evident, a great accommodation they must be, not only in cases of actual business, but in those visitings which go on in the dale.

Not only the people and their houses have an old-fashioned look, but you see continually out-of-doors lingering vestiges of long-past times and ancient usages. There are sledges, with which they bring stone and peat from the tops of the fells. I have often

wondered at the industry of mountain people in building up those stone walls, or dykes, as they call them, which you often see running up the mountain sides, to very distant and often very steep places; but crossing these fells, I discovered that the labour was far less than it seemed at first sight. The material has not to be carried up these lofty ascents: it abounds on their summits, and has only to be loosened, and slid down the hill sides on sledges, as they proceed, for they begin to build at the top, and not at the bottom. So their peat for fuel is found in abundance on the wet and spongy tops of these hills, and is dug, and reared on end to dry through the summer, and in the autumn is slid down on sledges. In the Scottish Highlands you see the women bringing the peat from the mountains in large creels, or baskets, on their backs, while their husbands are perhaps angling in the loch below; but here the men generally act a less lordly part; cutting and drying the peat with the help of their boys, and sledging it home into the bargain.

Besides these sledges, they have also that very ancient species of cart, the tumbrel; or as they call it, the Tumble-Cart. This is of so primitive a construction that the wheels do not revolve on a fixed axle, but the axle and wheels all revolve together. The wheels themselves are of a construction worthy of so pristine an axle; they are, in truth, wheels of the original idea: not things of the complex construction of nave, spokes, and fellies, but solid blocks of wood, into which the axle is firmly inserted; upon this axle the body of the vehicle is laid, and kept in its place by a couple of pegs. It is such a cart as you might imagine rumbling down these hills in the days

of their Saxon ancestors. Since good roads have been opened through the dales, carts of modern construction have followed, and these tumbrels will in awhile be no longer seen. They have, however, this advantage; in descending the steep sides of the hills, their clumsy construction of axle and wheel prevents them from running down too fast, and this is the cause why they are still retained. And yet this difficulty of movement sometimes becomes the cause of awkward dilemmas. These tumbrels are apt to stick in the bogs as they come down the fells, and are not easily drawn out. We were assured that there was one then sticking in a bog on the hills, past all chance of recovery; and some wag of the dale had made this distich on the accident, denoting the peculiar pre-eminence of clumsiness in the unfortunate vehicle.

Willie O'Middlebrough's tumble-car,
Many were better, and none waur.

With a carriage so antique, one is not surprised to find gears of corresponding character. Consequently, as in Cornwall, so here, collars of straw and a few ropes often serve to harness out the team.

As might be supposed, the inhabitants of one dale form a little community or clan where every one is known to the rest, and where a great degree of sociality and familiarity prevails: but the whole dale sub-divides itself again into neighbourhoods, where a stronger *esprit du corps* exists. The dales are singularly marked by lines of ravines and streams, which run down the sides of the fells from the bogs and springs on the heights. These lines are commonly fringed on the lower slopes by alders and other water-loving trees. The smaller streams are called sike,

the larger gills, and the largest, being generally those which run along the dale, becks. The space from gill to gill generally constitutes a neighbourhood, or if that space is small, it may include two or three gills. Within this boundary they feel it a duty, established by time and immemorial usage, to perform all offices of good neighbourhood, and especially that of associating together. For instance, when a birth is about to take place, they have what is called a Shout. The nearest neighbour undertakes the office of herald. She runs from house to house, through the neighbourhood, though it be dead of night, summoning all the wives with this cry—"Run, neighbour, run, for neighbour such-a-one wants thy help—and take thy warming-pan with thee!" The consequence is, that the house is speedily filled with women and warming-pans; a scene ludicrous, and, one would imagine, inconvenient enough too; but which the women of the dale all protest is a great comfort. When the child is born, there is a great ceremony of washing its head with brandy, which is performed by the father and his male friends, who are assembled for the occasion; and who then fall to, and make merry over their glasses.

The assembled women regale themselves with a feast of their own kind, being a particular species of bread made for the occasion, and sweet-butter; that is, butter mixed with rum and sugar, and having in truth no despicable flavour. Then comes the Wife-day, generally the second Sunday after the birth, when all the women of the neighbourhood who have attended at the Shout, go dressed in their best, to take tea, and hold a regular gossip, each carrying with her

a shilling and the news of the neighbourhood. The highest possible offence that can be given, is to pass over a person within the understood limits of the neighbourhood—it is the dead-cut. Sometimes there occurs a false Shout, either through the wantonness or malice of some ne'er-do-weel. In the night, the mischievous wag runs from house to house, and calls all the good wives to the dwelling whence they are hourly expecting such a summons. When they get there, they find it a hoax, and come under the name of May-goslings,—the term applied to this species of dupe. The joke, however, is no venial one, for it is perhaps played off on a severe and tempestuous night, and the good dames, muffled up in their cloaks, and lantern and warming-pan in hand, have to steer their way down the sides of hills, and across becks hidden by the drifts of snow. Similar assemblages take place at deaths, called Passings; and at Christmas, when they eat yule bread and yule cheese, made after a particular formula.

But perhaps the most characteristic custom of the Dales, is what is called their Sitting, or going-a-sitting. Knitting is a great practice in the dales. Men, women, and children all knit. Formerly you might have met the wagoners knitting as they went along with their teams; but this is now rare; for the greater influx of visitors, and their wonder expressed at this and other practices, has made them rather ashamed of some of them, and shy of strangers observing them. But the men still knit a great deal in the houses; and the women knit incessantly. They have knitting schools, where the children are taught; and where they sing in chorus knitting songs, some

of which appear as childish as the nursery stories of the last generation. Yet all of them bear some reference to their employment and mode of life; and the chorus, which maintains regularity of action and keeps up the attention, is of more importance than the words. Here is a specimen.

> Bell-wether o' Barking,* cries baa, baa,
> How many sheep have we lost to-day?
> Nineteen have we lost, one have we fun,
> Run Rockie,† run Rockie, run, run, run.

This is sung while they knit one round of the stocking; when the second round commences they begin again—

> Bell-wether o' Barking, cries baa, baa,
> How many sheep have we lost to-day?
> Eighteen have we lost, two have we fun,
> Run, Rockie, run Rockie, run, run, run;

and so on till they have knit twenty rounds, decreasing the numbers on the one hand, and increasing them on the other. These songs are sung not only by the children in the schools, but also by the people at their sittings, which are social assemblies of the neighbourhood, not for eating and drinking, but merely for society. As soon as it becomes dark, and the usual business of the day is over, and the young children are put to bed, they rake or put out the fire; take their cloaks and lanterns, and set out with their knitting to the house of the neighbour where the sitting falls in rotation, for it is a regularly circulating assembly from house to house through the particular neighbourhood. The whole troop of neighbours being collected, they sit and knit, sing knitting-songs,

* A mountain over-looking Dent Dale. † The shepherd's dog.

and tell knitting-stories. Here all the old stories and traditions of the dale come up, and they often get so excited that they say, "Neighbours, we 'll not part to-night," that is, till after twelve o'clock. All this time their knitting goes on with unremitting speed. They sit rocking to and fro like so many weird wizards. They burn no candle, but knit by the light of the peat fire. And this rocking motion is connected with a mode of knitting peculiar to the place, called swaving; which is difficult to describe. Ordinary knitting is performed by a variety of little motions, but this is a single uniform tossing motion of both the hands at once, and the body often accompanying it with a sort of sympathetic action. The knitting produced is just the same as by the ordinary method. They knit with crooked pins called pricks; and use a knitting-sheath consisting commonly of a hollow piece of wood, as large as the sheath of a dagger, curved to the side, and fixed in a belt called the cowband. The women of the north, in fact, often sport very curious knitting sheaths. We have seen a wisp of straw tied up pretty tightly, into which they stick their needles; and sometimes a bunch of quills of at least half-a-hundred in number. These sheaths and cowbands are often presents from their lovers to the young women. Upon the band there is a hook, upon which the long end of the knitting is suspended that it may not dangle. In this manner they knit for the Kendal market, stockings, jackets, nightcaps, and a kind of caps worn by the negroes, called bump-caps. These are made of very coarse worsted, and knit a yard in length, one half of which is turned into the other, before it has the appearance of a cap.

The smallness of their earnings may be inferred from the price for the knitting of one of these caps being three pence. But all knit, and knitting is not so much their sole labour as an auxiliary gain. The woman knits when her household work is done; the man when his out-of-door work is done; as they walk about their garden, or go from one village to another, the process is going on. We saw a stout rosy girl driving some cows to the field. She had all the character of a farmer's servant; without anything on her head, in her short bedgown, and wooden clogs, she went on after them with a great stick in her hand. A lot of calves which were in the field, as she opened the gate, seemed determined to rush out, but the damsel laid lustily about them with her cudgel, and made them decamp. As we observed her proceedings from a house opposite, and, amused at the contest between her and the calves, said, "well done! dairy maid!" "O," said the woman of the house, "that is no dairy maid: she is the farmer's only daughter, and will have quite a fortune. She is the best knitter in the dale, and makes four bump-caps a day;" that is, the young lady of fortune earned a shilling a-day.

The neighbouring dale, Garsdale, which is a narrower and more secluded one than Dent, is a great knitting dale. The old men sit there in companies round the fire, and so intent are they on their occupation and stories, that they pin cloths on their shins to prevent their being burnt; and sometimes they may be seen on a bench at the house, and where they have come out to cool themselves, sitting in a row knitting with their shin-cloths on, making the oddest appearance imaginable.

It may be supposed that eccentricity of character is the growth of such a place. A spirit of avarice is one of the most besetting evils. Many of the people are proprietors of their little homesteads; but there is no manufacturing beyond that of knitting, and money therefore is scarce. As it is not to be got very easily, the disposition to hold and save it becomes proportionably strong. They are extremely averse to suffer any money to go out of the dale; and will buy nothing, if they can avoid it, of people who travel the country with articles to sell; that would be sending money out of the dale; but they will go to a shop in the dale, and buy the same thing, not reflecting that the shopkeeper must first purchase it out of the dale, and therefore send money out of the dale to pay for it; and that what goes out of the dale for such articles comes back again by the sale of their horses, cattle, and sheep. A person who had been collector of the taxes in one of these dales, described to us the excessive difficulty he had to collect the money, even from those whom he knew always had it. They would put off payments as long as possible, and when he went and told them it was positively the last time he could call, they would sit doggedly, and declare that Sampson was strong, and Solomon was wise, but neither could pay money when they had not it. When they saw he would not depart, they would, at length, get up, go up stairs, where they always kept their cash. There he could hear them slowly open their chest, let down the lid again; open it again in awhile; then shut it again, and walk about the room as if unable to part with it. Then they would come to the top of the stairs, and shout down, saying they would not pay

it. Finding him still immoveable, they would come slowly down, but still persist—"I'll nae gie it thee!" Then perhaps soon after, as if relenting, they would come towards him, open their hand with the money in it, extending it towards him; but when he offered to take it, snatch it away, saying—"Nay; tou'st niver hae it!" Finally they would throw it to him, and with it abundance of angry words. We met a man of a most gaunt and miserable appearance. A young man not more than thirty years of age. He had all the aspect of a penurious fellow. Dirty, unshaven, with soiled clothes and unwashed linen. He was coming along the lane with a rude tumbril. This man was a thorough miser as ever existed. He lived totally alone. He suffered no woman to come about his house. If his clothes ever were washed they were done by himself, but he never bought an ounce of soap. He had bought a small property; a house and some adjoining crofts, where he lived. From this place he was called Tony of Todcrofts. This man was never known to part with money, except to the tax-gatherer. If he wanted a board put on his cart, or a nail to keep it together, he bargained with the wheelwright or the blacksmith to pay them in peat. He baked his own oatcake, and paid the miller in peat for grinding his oats. He drank milk from his own cow, and made his own clogs, cut from his own alder. He contrived to purchase little, and what he did purchase, he still paid for in peat. On the fells he cut peat all summer, making days of uncommon length; and in the autumn he drew it down with a sledge, and on one occasion having no horse, he carried the sledge, every time he reascended the hills, upon his back.

In such a place a man's appearance is no indication of his actual condition as respects property. Men who have good estates will be seen in a dress not worth three farthings altogether, except it were as a curiosity. They tell a story with great glee of an old Friend, John Wilkinson, who sate in a patched coat on a large stone by the road-side, knitting, when a gentleman riding by, stopped and fixed his eyes on him as in compassion, and then threw him half-a-crown. He picked it up, told him he was much obliged to him, but added—"May be I's richer na tou," and returned him the money, desiring him to give it to some one who had greater need of it. In fact, the old Friend was wealthy; and in this case his pride overcame his acquisitive propensity; but that propensity is unquestionably very powerful here, and another instance may be mentioned which occasioned a good deal of laughter in the dale. An old man of some property having a colt which he wanted breaking, instead of putting it into the hands of the horse-breaker, thought he would break it himself, and save the cost. Having brought it to carry him pretty well, he was desirous of making it proof against starting at sudden alarms. He therefore concerted with his wife that she should stand concealed behind the yard gate, and as he entered on the back of his colt, should pop out, and cry—Boh! Accordingly, in he rode, out popped the good-wife, and cried Boh! so effectually, that the horse made a desperate leap, and flung the old man with a terrible shock upon the pavement. Recovering himself, however, without any broken bones, though sorely bruised and shaken, he said, as he limped into the house—"Ah, Mally! Mally! that

was too big a boh! for an old man, and a young colt!"

This propensity extends too, amongst the women as well as the men: one woman declared she would as leave part with the skin off her back, as with her money. And yet, there are things which they will not do for money, as thousands of the poor in other districts do,—they won't work in a factory. The experiment was tried in this dale; but the people, like the French, would only work just when they pleased, and soon would not work at all. One would have thought that the strong love of gain amongst them, and their industrious habits would have insured success to such an experiment, but they had too much love for their own firesides, and the enjoyment of the fresh mountain air; the parents had too much love for their children to subject them to the daily incarceration amid heat, and dust, and flue from the cotton. The scheme failed; the factory stands a ruinous monument of the attempt, and these beautiful dales are yet free from the factory system. And yet, peaceful, and far removed as they are from the acts and oppressions by which the strong build their houses, and add field to field, out of the toils of the weak, they are not unacquainted with occasional instances of the evils done with impunity in the nooks of the world. I do not mean to represent such spots as Arcadias of purity and perfection. In the former chapter, and in this, I have indicated the vices which flourish, and the depravity which spreads in the shade of secluded life. The worst feature of these dales is the penurious spirit which little opportunity of profit produces; but I do not know that this spirit is a more sordid one than pervades the lower streets and alleys

of large towns. There is along with it a strong sense of meum and tuum; a strong and uncorrupted moral principle; and no man is in danger of either being filched of his purse, or if he chanced to lose it by accident, of not regaining it. As the pressure of poverty is not so tremendous, so the extinction of the moral sense is by no means so great as in large towns; and, on the other hand, how much more delightful a view of the social life of these people we have, than of those of similar rank in our large manufacturing towns, and especially amongst the lower classes of the metropolis, where they tread on each other from their multitudes, and yet, from the same cause, pass through life strangers to each other. Here the social sympathies are strongly called forth; a sort of kinship seems to pervade the whole neighbourhood; and they pass their lives, if in a good deal of poverty, yet in mutual confidence, and very pleasant habits of association. Every man and every spot has a name and share of distinction. Every gill and beck have their appellation, as Hacker-gill; Arten-gill; How-gill; Cow-gill; Spice-gill; Thomas O'Harbour-gill; Backstone-gill; Kale-beck; Monkey-beck. Every house has its name;—as Tinkler's Budget; Clint; Henthwaite-Hall; Coat-Fall; The Birchen Tree; Lile-Town; Riveling; Broad Mere; Hollins; Ellen-ha; Scale-gill-foot; Linter-Bank; Hollow-Mill,—all names in Dent. Their names for one another are the most familiar possible; and they use the christian names, and attach the christian names of their fathers and mothers in such a manner, that it is difficult to get at many peoples' surnames. They themselves know very well John o' Davits Fletcher, Kit o' Willie, or Willie o' Kit

o'Willie; when if the real name of these people were John Davis, Catherine Broadbent, or William Thistlethwaite, they would have to consider a while who was meant, if asked for by these names.

The dales' people have, therefore, evidently good elements; a strong social feeling; great simplicity of life and character; great honesty;—and the extension of the facility of voting in elections by dividing the counties, and appointing local polling places, has demonstrated that they have a strong love of liberal principles. All that appears wanting is exactly what is wanting in all these nooks, the introduction of more knowledge by the diffusion of sound and cheap publications, which would at once raise the moral tone, and inspire a more adventurous disposition, as is the case with the Scotch; so that those who do not find profitable employment in these pastoral dales, should set out in quest of more promising fields of action. As to crimes of magnitude, if you hear of them here, they are perpetrated by those in a higher class. There was a story ringing through one of the dales when we were there, which if half of it were true, was bad enough; and that we might arrive at as much truth as possible, we visited and conversed with those who were apparently likeliest to know it. It was said, and this too by those who had been in daily intercourse with the parties—that a very wealthy widow lady, who seemed to have been of weak intellect, or at least so unaccustomed to the world, and matters of business, as to become an easy prey to any clever and designing fellow, had entrusted the management of her affairs to a lawyer of a neighbouring town. That this lawyer twenty years ago made her will, in

which he had appointed himself one of the executors, and a gentleman of high character, living at a great distance, the other. That he had left in the will ten per cent. on the accumulations of her income to the executors, besides five hundred pounds each for the trouble of their office. That a man brought up in the house of the lady, was left 5000*l*. That from the original making of the will, it appeared never to have been read over again at any time to the lady; but that she had frequently dictated or written in pencil her instructions for its alteration in many particulars, which instructions or alterations at the final reading of the will after her decease nowhere appeared. That from the time the will was made till that of her death, twenty years, her lawyer-executor had continually tormented her with the fear of poverty. He had told her that her income did not meet her expenses; and through these representations had induced her to curtail her charities, and to lay down her carriage. This, however, did not suffice, and his representations made the poor lady miserable with the constant fear of coming poverty. In an agony of feeling on this subject, she one day sent her confidential servant to the lawyer to order him to sell her West Indian property. The lawyer said, "tell your mistress from me, that her West Indian property is not worth one farthing." This the servant, whom we took the trouble of seeing, confirmed to us. The poor woman, haunted with the fear of poverty, at length took to her bed, and a few days before her death, when, indeed, her recovery was hopeless, her lawyer appeared at her bedside and astounded her with the news, that so far from poverty, her West Indian property was very

large, and her income had actually accumulated in the funds to the sum of 80,000*l.*! and the hypocritical monster, with a refinement of cruelty perhaps never paralleled, humbly asked her, "how she would wish it disposed of?" The previous progress of the poor lady's illness, and this overwhelming intelligence, rendered any present disposal impossible. She was thrown into the most fearful distress of mind,—and continually exclaiming, "O! please God that I might recover, how different things should be!" died on the third day.

When the will was read, the man who had 5000*l.* left him twenty years ago, found it left him still; and yet this man had for years lost the good opinion of the lady, by his misconduct, and had not been permitted to come into her presence for two years. This was a striking proof that her will had not of late years been adapted to her altered mind. This man, who first came into the lady's house as a shoe-black, or some such thing, and had on one occasion for his misconduct, the alternative offered him either to quit her service, or be carried up to the top of the neighbouring fell, on the back of one man and down again, while he was flogged by another, and was of so base a nature that he had chosen the flagellation, and continuance in a family where he was regarded with contempt—this man had now actually purchased the lady's house of the executors, and lived in it! We walked past it, and naturally regarding it with a good deal of curiosity, a ludicrous scene occurred. I suppose, being strangers, and I having a moreen bag in my hand, it was inferred from our particular observation of the place, that I was a lawyer, come down on

the behalf of some dissatisfied expectant, to inquire into the case. However that might be, we presently saw the man's wife, a very common-looking person, and appearing wonderfully out of place as the mistress of such a house, peeping at us from the windows, first on one side of the house, and then on the other, and at the same time attempting to screen herself from view by partly unclosing the shutters, and placing herself behind them. Soon after, her daughter too came with stealthy steps, out of the back-door, crept cautiously round the house, and posted herself behind a bush to watch us; nor had we advanced far from the place, when the man himself came hurrying along, and went past us with very black and inquisitive looks.

We were told that on the will being read, the other executor being now present, was not more amazed at the fact of his becoming, unknown to himself, so greatly benefited by it, than he was at the general details of it. He inquired of the lawyer if the will had been read to the lady from time to time, in order to see whether it might require some alteration, and being told by him that it had not, he seemed filled with the utmost astonishment and indignation, and abruptly said to him—"Why, there is nothing but damnation for you!" and with that proceeded in such piercing terms to shew to the lawyer the cruelty and wickedness of his conduct, that the man trembled through every joint. It was added that the lawyer "never looked up afterwards," but was in the greatest distress of mind, and daily wasted away. That when the tenants of the property, some time afterwards went to pay their rents, they found him propped up in bed with bolsters and pillows, a most pitiable object; his

inkhorn stitched into the bed-quilt by him, and yet his trembling hand scarcely able to direct his pen into it. That such was the effect of fear, and the visitings of conscience on his superstitious mind, that he drank the water which dropped from the church-roof in rainy weather, in the hope it would do him good!

This is a most extraordinary story, but we found one of these quiet dales ringing with it from end to end, and this was the account given by most trustworthy people, who knew the parties well, and one of whom was the lady's confidential servant. Amongst the stories which we heard relating to the past state of these dales, was one of the murder of a Highland drover, in its particulars bearing a striking resemblance to the story of Scott's, told under that title. In Swale Dale is said to be a race of gipsies, a very fine set of people; and a remarkable account was given us of one of them, a singularly fine woman in her time, called Nance of Swaledale.

They have some singular customs in these dales not yet mentioned. One is, when a sow litters, they allow her to champ oats out of a bee-hive to make the bees lucky; and salt is thrown into the fire, with the same object, when the bees swarm. Another of their customs arises out of their spirit of good neighbourhood, and mutual accommodation. In sheep-shearing time, instead of each man shearing his flock solitarily, they combine together in troops, and go from farm to farm, till they have completed the whole, and celebrate the end of their labours at each house, over a good supper given by the master.

Here then I close this second chapter of the nooks of the world, bearing grateful testimony that amongst

the virtues of the dales-people, hospitality and attachment to their pleasant hills and valleys are pre-eminent. Wherever we went we found them only too happy to shew us all the beauties of their country, the winding becks, the scars and waterfalls, and prospects from the loftiest fells. When they had trudged with us for many a weary mile, through moss and moor, they would hang the girdle upon the peat-fire, and in a wonderfully short time have those delicious little kettle-cakes, made of pastry, and thickly dotted with currants, smoking on the tea-table. And when you came in at a late hour, would bring you out those rural dainties, equally delicious, gooseberry tarts, with curds and cream. Long may the simple virtues of the Dales remain, while knowledge in its growth, roots out the more earthly traits of character, and implants a bolder spirit of enterprise, with the present moral integrity of mind.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD ENGLISH HOUSES.

Our country houses, and especially the older ones, are in themselves an inestimable national treasure. A thousand endearing associations gather about them. I cannot conceive a more deeply interesting work than a history of them which entered fully into the spirit of the times in which they were raised, and through which they have stood. Which should give us a view of the national changes which have passed over them; mighty revolutions, whether abrupt and violent, or slow and silent, in fortune, in manners, and in mind; and still more, which should, aided by family paintings, family documents and traditions, unfold their domestic annals. What an opening up of the human heart would be there! There is nothing more splendid, or surprising, or fearful, or pathetic, or happy and fanciful in romance, than would be there discovered. There is no success, no glory of life and action, no image of princely or baronial power, no strange freaks of fortune, none of the startling, or the moving incidents of humanity but have there enrolled themselves. What noble hearts;

what great and pathetic spirits have dwelt at one time or other in those old places; and then, what beautiful and bewitching creatures have cast through them the sunshine of their presence; have made them glad with their wit, and their gay fancies, and their strong affections; or have hallowed them with their sufferings and their tears. O for the revelation of the fair forms; of the scenes of successful or sorrowful love; of the bridals and the burials; of the poetic dreams and pious aspirations, that have warmed or saddened these old halls through the flight of ages! Much of this is gone for ever; swept into the black and fathomless gulf of oblivion; but enough might be recovered to make us wonder at what has passed upon our ancestral soil, and to make us love it with a still deeper love. There is no portion of our national history, or point of our national character, but would be brought into the sweep of such narratives, and receive illustration from them. Our warriors, statesmen, philosophers, divines, poets, beauties, and heroines more admirable than beauty could make them, would all figure there.* In the galleries of many of these houses hang portraits to which traditions are attached that would freeze the blood, or make it dance with ardour and delight; that would chain up the listening spirit in breathless attention, in awe and curiosity. In the very writings by which the estates are secured, in old charters, wills and other deeds, facts are traced and changes developed of the most singular character; and in the oral annals of the

* This was written three years ago. Since then the author has made considerable progress in such a work.

families exist correlative testimonies, which have been imprinted there by the intense interest of the circumstances themselves.

How delightful it is to go through those hereditary abodes of ancient and distinguished families, and to see, in the very construction of them, images of the past times, and their modes of existence. Here you pass through ample courts, amid rambling and extensive offices that once were necessary to the jolly establishment of the age, for hounds, horses, hawks, and all their attendants and dependencies. Here you come into vast kitchens, with fire-places at which three or four oxen might be roasted at once, with mantel-pieces wide as the arch of a bridge, and chimneys as large as the steeple of a country church. Then you advance into great halls, where scores of rude revellers have feasted in returning from battle, or the chase, in the days of feudal running and riding, of foraying and pilgrimages; of hard knocks and hard lying: ere tea and coffee had supplanted beef and ale at breakfast; ere books had charmed away spears and targets, tennis-courts and tourneys, and political squabbles and parliamentary campaigning, the scouring of marches, and firing of neighbours' castles. Then again, you advance into tapestried chambers, on whose walls mythological or scriptural histories, wrought by the fingers of high-born dames, at once impress you with a sense of very still and leisurely and woodland times, when Crockford's and Almack's were not; nor the active spirit of civilization had raised up weavers, and spinners, and artificers of all kinds by thousands on thousands, by towns-full and cities-full. And now you come to the very

closets and bowers of the ladies themselves—scenes of worn and faded splendour, but shewing enough of their original state to mark their wide difference from the silken boudoirs and luxurious dormitories of the fair dames of this age of swarming and busy artizans; of ample rents and city life; instead of hunting and fighting, of wars in the heart of France, or civil wars at home, to call out the heads of houses, or perhaps, drive their families forth with fire and sword in their absence. Then there is the antique chapel, and the library; the one having, in most cases, been deserted by its ancient faith, the other still bearing testimony to the range of reading of our old squires and nobles, since reading became a part of their education, in a few grim folios,—a Bible, a Gwillim's Heraldry, one or two of our Chroniclers, and a few Latin Classics or Fathers, for the enjoyment of the chaplain.

But the armoury and the great gallery—these are the places in which a flood of historic light pours in upon you, and the spirit of the past is made so palpable, that you forget your real existence in this utilitarian century; you forget reform in all its shapes —ballot, household suffrage, triennial parliaments; you forget the cry of the church and king; and the counter-cry from a million of eager voices, for liberty of hearth and faith; you forget that, all around you, from the very walls that surround you to the distant sea, is nothing but fields cultivated like gardens, secured by gates and fences, and tenfold more costly and powerful parchment, to their particular owners; you forget that towns stand by hundreds, and villages by thousands, filled with a busy, an inquisitive, a reading, thinking, aspiring and irresistible population;

and that all the institutions, the opinions, the loves and doings of the times when these things before you were matters of familiar life, are gone, or are going, for ever: that,

Another race has been, and other palms are won.

Yes, mighty and impressive as these things are; deeply as they visit your daily thought and nightly dreams; woven as they are with the thread of your existence, and your hopes and belief of the future ages,—yes, potent as they are, they vanish for a time. Here are swords, helmets, coats of mail, and plate-armour standing up in its own massiveness; shells from which the active bodies which moved them, have long ago disappeared. Here are buff-coats, ponderous boots, and huge spurs; broad hats, with sweeping feathers, and chains of gold, crosses and amulets, which make the past for ever in time, the past for ever in spirit, come back again with a vivid and intoxicating effect. You gaze upon arms and relics which figured in all the battles and pilgrimages, the desperate strifes and extravagant pageants of our ancestors; you behold things which link your fancies to all the romantic ages of European history. You forget the present; and exist amid forests, the stern strength of castles, and the venerable quiet of convents. You are ready to listen to the distant bell of the abbey; for news of the crusaders; you expect as you ride through the woods, to stumble upon the abode of the hermit. These arms and fragments before you, were in the battles of Cressy and Poictiers; in the wars of the Roses; in the Tourney of the Field of the Cloth-of-Gold; that mail, on the back of some stout knight, climbed over

the ramparts of Askalon, or of Jerusalem itself; and those, bringing you down the stream of strange events, are the equipments of Cavaliers and of Puritan leaders, when the spirit of feudalism and that of progression came so rudely into strife as to shake the kingdom like an earthquake. You step into the gallery, and there are the very men whose iron habiliments you have been contemplating; there are the rude portraitures of the warriors of an earlier day; and there are the Sidneys, the Howards, the Essexes and Leicesters, the Warwicks and Wiltons, of an after one; the men that set up and pulled down kings, that waded through the blood of others, or that poured out their own, for honour and liberty. You have read of some handsome and gallant knight who wrought some chivalric miracle, who perhaps died in its performance—he is there! You have glowed over the accounts of arrogant or fascinating beauties, who turned the heads of kings and nobles—they are there! worthy of all their fame, their very shadows filling you with sighs and dreams of loveliness which will haunt you in the open sunshine, and amid all the cheerful sounds of present life.

But it is not merely these great historic characters. There are family ones that constitute a history amongst themselves, most interesting and touching. There are the founders of those families. There is the great minister, who once rose to the favour of his sovereign, and swayed the destinies of the kingdom; there is the great churchman that climbed up from plebeian obscurity to the primacy; there is the judge who, from a younger brother of an ancient line, became the fortunate founder of a new one; there are admirals, generals, and nobles, who have figured in the cam-

paigns of every reign. There are stern forms that were despots in their own sphere, or calm and smiling faces that have such blots and dark passages attached to them as confound all your physiognomical acuteness; and there are beautiful and gentle-looking creatures, that are most strangely tainted with blood; noble matrons, who knew sorrows for which neither their rank and affluence, no, nor the possessions of ten kingdoms could make recompense; and lastly, there are young boys and girls, that look on you with most innocent archness or open good-nature, which perished like blossoms ere fully opened, or lived to make you shudder over their remembrance.

Such are many of our older houses, to say nothing of later and more splendid ones; nothing of all the modern attractions that have been added to their ancient ones; nothing of those sumptuous places which our nobility have raised on their estates, and filled with all the luxurious adornments of modern life, and with the wealth of art. And then those houses stand scattered over all the kingdom, in fine old parks, in gardens of quaint alleys and topiary work; or in the freer beauty of modern lawns and shrubberies; objects of pleasure and pride to thousands beside their own possessors.

Horace Walpole wished that they were all collected in London, and then should we have had such a capital as the world could not boast. Heaven forgive him for the wish! A splendid capital no doubt we should have had, but we should not have had such a country, such a people, such a national strength and character as we have. It is by living scattered through the realm, amid their own people, their own lands and

woods, that our gentry have retained such high independence of principle, and such healthy tastes as they have done. It is by this means that agriculture, and horticulture, and rural architecture have been promoted to the extent they have reached; that the whole kingdom has become a paradise, and that the people have been linked to the interests of their superiors. We have only too many temptations already to a crowding into our capital. A city life to a wealthy aristocracy must become a life of luxury and splendour, a life of dissipation and rivalry. The enjoyments of society, of music, and of public spectacles, at intervals, might refine the taste; but when this species of life becomes almost perpetual, its certain consequence must be to deteriorate and effeminate character: to weaken the domestic attachments: to divert from, or disincline for that sober thought and those studies which lead to greatness, or leave behind solid satisfaction. We have already too much of this, and its effect will daily become more and more conspicuous, as it is of more and more vital importance. Now, while the people are struggling to acquire possession of rights that they long knew not their claim to: now that they are growing informed, and therefore quick to see and to feel—those on whom they look as their natural and powerful rivals, are living at a distance from them: taking no means to conciliate their good-will, or to retain their esteem. Their humble neighbours feel no effect from their estates except the withdrawal of their rents; and they ask themselves what claim these people, who are living in our great Babylon,

Minions of splendour, shrinking from distress,—

have upon their veneration or regard. Is it not in these noble ancestral houses, amid their ancestral woods and lands, that the spirit of our gentry is most likely to acquire a right tone? Here, where they are surrounded by objects and memories of worth, of greatness and renown, that the fire of a generous and glorious emulation is most likely to be kindled; and that all the best feelings of their nature are likely to be touched, and their best affections quickened? Even Horace Walpole himself furnishes an instance in proof. Little as he had of the pensive and poetical in him, his visit to the family place at Houghton called up such thoughts and emotions as, if encouraged instead of avoided, might have made him aware of higher qualities in himself than he was habitually accustomed to display. "Here am I," says he in one of his letters, "at Houghton! and alone; in this spot where, except two hours last month, I have not been in sixteen years! Think what a crowd of reflections! No!—Gray, and forty church-yards could not furnish so many; nay, I know one must feel them with greater indifference than I possess, to have patience to put them into verse. Here I am, probably for the last time in my life, though not for the last time; every clock that strikes, tells me that I am one hour nearer to yonder church,—that church into which I have not yet had courage to enter; where lies the mother on whom I doated, and who doated on me! There are the two rival mistresses of Houghton, neither of whom ever wished to enjoy it. There too lies he, who founded its greatness; to contribute to whose fall, Europe was embroiled. There he sleeps in quiet and dignity, while his friend and his foe, rather his false

ally and real enemy, Newcastle and Bath, are exhausting the dregs of their pitiful lives in squabbles and pamphlets.

"The surprise the pictures gave me is again renewed. Accustomed for many years to see wretched daubs and varnished copies at auctions, I look at these as enchantment..... A party arrived just as I did, to see the house: a man and three women, in riding dresses, and they rode fast through the apartments. I could not hurry before them fast enough; they were not so long in seeing for the first time, as I could have been in one room, to examine what I knew by heart. I remember formerly being often diverted by this kind of *seers;* they come, ask what such a room is called, in which Sir Robert lay: admire a lobster, or a cottage in a market piece; dispute whether the last room was green or purple; and then hurry to the inn, for fear the fish should be overdressed. How different my situation! Not a picture here but recalls a history; not one but I remember in Downing-street, or Chelsea, where queens and crowds admired them, though seeing them as little as these travellers.

"When I had drank tea I strolled into the garden. They told me it was now called the *pleasure-ground.* What a dissonant idea of pleasure! Those groves, those *alleys,* where I have passed so many charming moments, are now stripped up, or overgrown; many fond paths I could not unravel, though with a very exact clue in my memory. I met two gamekeepers, and a thousand hares! In the days when all my soul was tuned to pleasure and vivacity, I hated Houghton and its solitude; yet I loved this garden; as now, with many regrets, I love Houghton;—Houghton, I

know not what to call it: a monument of grandeur or ruin! How I wished this evening for Lord Bute! How I could preach to him!—The servants wanted to lay me in the great apartment—what! to make me pass the night as I had done my evening! It were like proposing to Margaret Roper to be a duchess in the court which cut off her father's head, and imagining it could please her. I have chosen to sit in my father's little dressing-room, and am now in his escritoire, where, in the height of his fortune, he used to receive the accounts of his farmers, and deceive himself, or us, with the thoughts of his economy. How wise a man, at once, and how weak! For what has he built Houghton? For his grandson to annihilate, or his son to mourn over."

Horace Walpole's Letters, vol. ii. pp. 227-8.

Having made these preliminary observations, I will now give a specimen or two from my own neighbourhood,* because necessarily more familiar with them; let every reader throughout England look round him in his, and he will find others as interesting there.

* This and other parts of the work were written at Nottingham.

CHAPTER V.

HARDWICK HALL.

Mrs. Jameson has lately given a very vivid and charming account of this fine old place. I am not going to tread in her steps, but to describe the impression it made upon myself at different times, in my own way, and with reference to my own object.

My first visit to it was when I was a youth of about seventeen. I had heard nothing at all of it, and had no idea that it was an object of any particular interest. I was at Mansfield, and casually heard that the present Duke of Devonshire, its proprietor, was come of age, and that there, as at his other houses, his birth-day was to be kept by his tenants and the neighbouring peasantry in the old English style. The house lies about five miles to the north of Mansfield, not far from the Chesterfield road. I set off, and learning that there was a footway, I passed through one or two quiet, old-fashioned villages, through solitary fields and deep woody valleys, a road that for its beauty and out-of-the-world air delighted me exceedingly. I at length found myself at the entrance of a large old park. The tall towers

of the hall had been my landmarks all the way, and now that unique building, standing on the broad, level plain, surrounded at a distance by the old oaks of the park, burst upon me with an unexpected effect. It was unlike any thing I had seen; but there were solemn halls in the regions of poetry and romance, that my imagination immediately classed it amongst. I advanced toward it with indescribable feelings of wonder and delight. I could have wished that it had been standing in its ordinary solitude, for that seemed to my mind its true and natural state; but it was not so: around it swarmed crowds of rustic revellers, and I determined to take things as I found them; to consider this very scene as a feature of the olden time; and to see how it went, about the baronial dwellings in the feudal ages, on occasions like that.

It was not long before I came upon a man lying on his face under the trees;—he was dead drunk. Soon I passed another, and another, and another: a little farther, and they lay about like the slain on the outskirts of a battle. When I came into the open plain before the hall, the sound of a band of music which had probably been some time silent through the musicians themselves dining, reached me; I heard drunken songs and wild outcries mingling with it. All about the lawn were scattered clustered throngs. I saw barrels standing; spigots running; men catching their hats full, and running here and there, while others were snatching at their prize, and often spilling the ale on the ground. Sometimes there were two or three trying to drink out of a hat at once; others were stooping down to drink at the spigots; there were fighting, scuffling, clamour, and confusion. All round the

hall people swarmed like bees. At the doors and gates dense masses were trying to force their way in; while stout fellows were thumping away at their sculls with huge staves, with an energy that one would have thought enough to kill them by dozens, but which seemed to make little impression.

While this was going on, being a slim youth, I slipped beneath the uplifted arm of a stout yeoman, and made a safe ingress. I stood astonished at the place into which I had entered. Those ample and lofty rooms, in which stood huge pieces of roast-beef on huge pewter dishes, and great leathern jacks, tankards, and modern jugs of ale, at which scores of people were eating and drinking as voraciously as if they had been fasting all the one-and-twenty years to do due honour to this great birth-day; while the servants were running to and fro, filling up foaming measures, which were emptied again with wonderful rapidity. Those vast kitchens too, with their mighty fire-places, and tongs, and pokers, and spits fit for the kitchen of Polyphemus; with broiling cooks, and hurrying menials, called on by twenty voices at once. I made my way to the front court, where, under canvass awnings, long tables were set out for the tenantry and yeomanry of the neighbourhood, admitted by ticket. O what a company of jolly, rosy, full-grown, well-fed fellows was there, making no sham onset on the plum-pudding and roast-beef of Old England! The band kept up a triumphant din; but when it ceased for a moment, what a rattle of knives and forks, and a clatter of ale-cups, what a clamour of tongues and hearty laughter became perceptible! And all round the court, the walls were covered with

swarms of men, that climbed up no trivial height to get a view of the jovial banquet, and many a cry was raised to throw up thither some of those good things. And sure enough here went a piece of beef, and here a lump of pudding; and a score of hands caught at them; and a hundred voices joined in the roar of laughter as they were caught, or fell back again into the court, or flew over the wall amongst the scrambling crowd.

But suddenly there was in the midst of all this noise and jollity, a cry of horror; and it was soon seen that one of the pointed stones that stand at intervals on the top of the high wall all round the court, had disappeared. It had given way with a man who clung to it, had fallen upon him, and killed him on the spot. There was a momentary pause in the festivity; a great running together to the spot of the catastrophe; but the body was soon conveyed away to an outbuilding, and the tide of riot rolled on. It was doomed, however, to receive a second check; for another man, in the wild excitement of the time, and of the strong ale, sprang at one bound over a wall that stood on the edge of a precipice, and fell a shattered corpse into the hollow below. These were awful events, and cast over some of the revellers a gloom that would not disperse; but far the greater part were now too highly charged with birthday ale to be capable of reflection. All around was Bacchanalian chaos. Singing, shouting, attempts at dancing, reeling and tumbling. Bodies lay thickly strewn through court and hall, and far around on the lawn. Some gay sparks were, with mock respect, carried with much struggling and laughter, and laid

in sheds and stables and under trees, and one special dandy was deposited in a heap of soot. For myself, perhaps the only sober person there, I hastened away, resolving to revisit that fairy mansion in the time of its restored quiet.

And in what a far different aspect did it present itself when I next saw it; and with what a far different company did I witness it! It was on one of the most glorious days of a splendid summer that we passed under the shadow of its oaks, as happy and attached a company as ever met on earth. Ah! they are all dispersed now! Out of a dozen glad hearts, not more than three are living now. But let me forget that. We were a joyful band of tried friends then. All, except myself and a young Yorkshire damsel, light as a sylph, and lovely and frolic as a fairy, were in carriages; we were on horseback; and scarcely had we entered the park, when, as if the sight of its fine wide level had filled her with an irresistible desire to scour across it, the madcap gave her horse the rein, and darted away. Under the boughs of the oaks she stooped, and flew along with arrowy swiftness. Every moment I expected to see her caught by one of them, and dashed to the ground; but she was too practised a horsewoman for that: she cleared the trees; the deer bounded away as she came galloping towards them, and turned and gazed at her from a distance; the rooks, and daws, and lapwings feeding on the turf, soared up and raised wild cries; but she sped on, and there was nothing for me to do but to follow. I spurred forwards, but it was only to see her rush, at the same reckless speed, down a deep descent, where one trip of her horse—and nothing was more likely—

and she would have flown far over his head to certain death. Yet down she went, and down I followed; but ere I reached the bottom, she was urging her horse up as steep an ascent, on whose summit, as I approached it, I found her seated on her panting steed, laughing at her exploit and my face of wonder.

When we reached the Hall, there were all our friends in the court, and the kind-hearted old gentleman, the head of the party, standing at the great hall door, laughing heartily at the attempts of each of the youngsters in succession to walk blindfold up a single row of the flags that lead from the court-gates to the house. Every one began full of confidence; but the laughter and cries of the rest, soon proclaimed the failure of the enterprise. When it came to the turn of our merry madcap, up she walked with a bold step, and course as strait as if guided by a clue, from gate to door. All at once exclaimed that she could see, and busy hands were soon at work to fasten the handkerchief so artfully round her head, that she could not possibly get a glimpse of daylight. Again she was led to the gate, and again she marched up to the door as quickly and directly as before. The wonder was great; but still it was asserted that she *must* see:—it was that fine Grecian nose of hers that permitted a glance down beside it, enough for the guidance of the spirited damsel; so handkerchief was bound on handkerchief, aslant and athwart, to exclude every possibility of seeing; and again she was set at the gate; and again went gaily and confidently to the door without one erring footstep. There was a general murmur of applause and wonder. I see that light and buoyant figure still advancing up the line of flags; I see those

golden locks dancing in the sunshine as she went; I see that lovely countenance, those blue and laughing eyes, full of a merry triumph, as her friends unbound her beautiful head. I see the same glad creature, all vivacity and happiness, now sitting on the warm turf, now bounding up long flights of stairs; now standing, to the terror of her companions, on the jutting edge of a ruinous tower; — and can it be true, that that fairy creature has long been dead! the light of those lovely eyes extinguished! those lovely locks soiled with the damp churchyard earth! Alas! we know too well how readily such things come to pass. But no black presage came before us there. All around was summer sunshine; we explored every nook of that old ivied ruin, the older house of Hardwick, in which the Queen of Scots was confined; paced the celebrated banqueting room, adorned with the figures of Gog and Magog, with an angel flying between them with a drawn sword. We rambled over the leaden roof, and in the happy folly of youth, marked each other's foot upon it, with duly inscribed names and date. We went all through the present house; through its tapestried rooms, along its gallery, into its ancient chapel, and up to its armoury, a tower on the roof; and finally adjourned to the neat little inn at Glapwell, to a merry tea, and thence home.

My next visit to Hardwick was last autumn. My companions now were, my true associate for the last seventeen years, and one little boy and girl, who, as we advanced up the park, rambled on before us in eager delight. Twenty years had passed since that youthful party I have just mentioned was there; — twenty years to me of many sober experiences; of naturally

extended knowledge; of observation of our old English houses in various parts of the kingdom: but as I once more approached Hardwick, I felt that it had lost none of its effect,—nay, that that effect was actually increased: it was more unworldly, more unlike anything else, or anything belonging to common life; more poetical, more crowned and overshadowed with beautiful and solemn associations, than it was when I first beheld it in my youth. The distance you have to advance, from the moment you emerge from amongst the trees of the park into a full view of the Hall, until you reach it, tends greatly to heighten its effect. There it stands, bold and alone, on a wide unobstructed plain.

No trees crowd upon it, or break, for a moment, the view; it lifts itself up in all its solemn and unique grandeur to the blue heavens, like a fairy palace, in the days of old Romance. It is a thing expressly of by-gone times—darkened indeed by age, but not injured. Unlike modern mansions, you see no bustle of human life about it; no gardens and shrubberies; but wings of grey, and not very high walls, extending to a considerable distance over the plain, from each end of the house, inclosing what gardens there are, and paddocks. You see no offices appended,—it seems a place freed from all mortal necessities,—inhabited by beings above them. All offices, in fact, that are not included within the regular walls of the house are removed to a considerable distance with the farm-yard. As you draw near, its grave aspect strikes you more strongly; you become more sensible of its loftiness, of the vast size of its windows, and of that singular parapet which surmounts it. It is an oblong

building, with three square towers at each end, both projecting from, and rising much higher than, the body of the building. The parapet surmounting these towers is a singular piece of open-work of sweeping lines of stone, displaying the initials of the builder, E. S.—Elizabeth Shrewsbury,—surmounted with the coronet of an earl. On all sides of the house these letters and crown strike your eye, and the whole parapet appears so unlike what is usually wrought in stone, that you cannot help thinking that its singular builder, old Bess of Hardwick, must have cut out the pattern in paper with her scissors. It is difficult to say, whether this remarkable woman had a greater genius for architecture or matrimony. She was the daughter of John Hardwick of Hardwick, and sole heiress of this estate. She married four times, always contriving to get the power over her husband's estates, by direct demise, or by intermarrying the children of their former marriages with those of former husbands, so that she brought into the family immense estates, and laid the foundation of four dukedoms. Her genius for architecture is sufficiently conspicuous in this unique pile, and by the engraving of Worksop Manor in Thoroton's Nottinghamshire, as erected by her, though since destroyed by fire, a building full of the same peculiar character. It is said that it having been foretold her by some astrologer, that the moment she ceased to build would be the moment of her death, she was perpetually engaged in building. At length as she was raising a set of alms-houses at Derby, a severe frost set in. All measures were resorted to necessary to enable the men to continue their work: their mortar was dissolved with hot water, and when

that failed, with hot ale; but the frost triumphed—the work ceased, and Bess of Hardwick expired! This noble building I trust will long continue to perpetuate her memory, lifting aloft on its parapet her conspicuous E. S.

All the lower walls surrounding the courts and paddocks, are finished with similar openwork of bands of curved and knotted stone. A colonnade runs along each side of the house between the projecting towers, and the entrance-front is enclosed by that court of which I have already spoken; having its walls mounted, at intervals, with quaint pyramidal stones. On this side of the house a fine valley opens itself, filled with noble woods, a large water, and displaying beyond a hilly and pleasant country.

At about a hundred yards from the Hall stands the remains of the old one. The progress of dilapidation upon this building, since my last visit, was striking. Then you could ascend to the leaden roof; but now means were adopted to prevent that, on account of its unsafe state; in fact, the stairs themselves have partly fallen in; many of the floors of the rooms have fallen through; the ceiling of the celebrated banqueting-room itself has given way by places, and in others is propped up by stout pieces of timber. The glory of Gog and Magog will soon be annihilated, or they will be left on the walls, exposed to the astonished gaze of the passer-by, as are some stucco alto-relievoes of stags under forest trees on the chamber walls, with ivy drooping over them from the top of the walls above, and tall trees that have sprung on the hearths of destroyed rooms below, waving before them. This is the outward aspect of those old halls where Mary

Stuart, and the almost equally unfortunate Arabella Stuart, once dwelt. Within, the present hall is as perfect a specimen of an Elizabethan house, as can be wished. "The state apartments are lofty and spacious, with numerous transom windows admitting a profusion of light. The hall is hung with very curious tapestry, which appears to be as ancient as the fifteenth century. On one part of it, is a representation of boar-hunting, and on another of otter-hunting. In the chapel, which is on the first-floor, is a very rich and curious altar-cloth, thirty feet long, hung round the rails of the altar, with figures of saints under canopies wrought in needle-work. The great dining-room is on the same floor, over the chimney-piece of which are the arms of the Countess of Shrewsbury, with the date of 1597. The most remarkable apartments in this interesting edifice are the state room, or room of audience, as it is called, and the gallery. The former is sixty-four feet nine inches, by thirty-three feet, and twenty-six feet four inches high. At one end of it, is a canopy of state, and in another part a bed, the hangings of which are very ancient. This room is hung with tapestry, in which is represented the story of Ulysses; over this are figures, rudely executed in plaster, in bas-relief, amongst which is a representation of Diana and her nymphs. The gallery is about 170 feet long and 26 wide, extending the whole length of the eastern side of the house; and hung with tapestry, on a part of which is the date of 1478."* The house has not only been kept in repair, but exactly in the state in which its builder

* Lyson's Magna Britannia.

left it, as to furniture and fitting up, with a very few exceptions, and these in the most accordant taste. For instance, the Duke of Devonshire has brought hither his family pictures from Chatsworth, so as to make this fine gallery, the family picture gallery. Not another painting has been suffered to enter. He has also now added a most appropriate feature to the entrance hall, a statue of the Queen of Scots, of the size of life, by Westmacott. It stands on a pedestal of the same stone, bearing an armorial escutcheon.

Mrs. Jameson expresses strongly the effect of the huge escutcheons, the carved arms thrust out from the wall, intended to hold lights, and the great antlers, as she first entered this hall by night; but what would have been the effect of seeing Mary Stuart herself standing full opposite, as if to receive her to this place of her former captivity.* To her, and to every imaginative person, the effect must have been powerful, and solemnly impressive. Gray the poet, instead of thinking that the Queen of Scots had but just walked down into the park for half an hour, would have seen her visibly here. I have seen the portraits of Queen Mary, both here and in Holyrood, but none of them give me a thousandth part of the idea of what she must have been, compared with this statue.

With these two exceptions, both of which tend to strengthen the legitimate influence of the place, all besides is exactly as it was. You ascend the broad, easy oak stairs; you see the chapel by their side, with all its brocaded seats and cushions; you advance along vast passages, where stand huge chests filled with

* I do not mean literally that this house was the place of her captivity, it was the old one.

coals, and having ample crypts in the walls for chips and fire-wood. Here are none of the modern contrivances to conceal these things: but they stand there before you, with an air of rude abundance, according well with the ancient mixture of baronial state and simplicity. You go on and on, through rooms all hung with rich old tapestry, glowing with pictorial scenes from scriptural or mythological history; all furnished with antique cabinets, massy tables, high chairs covered with crimson velvet, or ornamental satin. You behold the very furniture used by Queen Mary; the very bed she worked with her own fingers. But perhaps that spacious gallery, extending along the whole front of the house, gives the imagination a more feudal feeling than all. Its length, nearly two hundred feet; its great height; its stupendous windows, composing nearly the whole front, rattling and wailing as the wind sweeps along them. What a magnificent sough, and even thunder of sound must fill that wild old place in stormy weather. There you see arranged high and low, portraits of most of the characters belonging to the family or history of the place, of all degrees of execution. It is not my intention to give any details, either of those or of the furniture; that having been done by Mrs. Jameson with the accuracy and feeling that particularly distinguish her. I aim only at imparting the general effect. It is enough therefore to say that there are "many beautiful women and brave men:" portraits of bluff Harry VIII; those of the rival queens, Mary and Elizabeth; her keeper, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and his masculine wife, Elizabeth of Hardwick; and the philosophers, Boyle and Hobbs. One interesting particular

of Mrs. Jameson's statement, however, we could not verify:—the tradition of the nocturnal meeting of the rival queens in the gallery. We never heard of it before; nor could we now find, by the most particular inquiries, even among the domestics, any knowledge of such a tradition. It was as new to them as to us; and we therefore set it down as a pleasant poetical tradition of the fair author's own planting.

The Duke was come hither from Chatsworth, to spend a week, and he seemed to have come in the spirit befitting the place; for there was scarcely more than its usual establishment; scarcely less than its usual quietness perceptible. The Duke himself we had met on the road, and in his absence were shown through the apartments which he uses on these occasions; and it had a curious effect amid all this staid and sombre antiquity, to find, on a plain oak table in the library, the newspapers of the day; the Athenæum, Court Journal, the Spectator, and Edinburgh Review; the works of Dr. Channing; and Hood's Tylney Hall, just then published. What an antithesis! what a mighty contrast between the spirit of the past and the present!—the life and stir of the politics and the passing literature of the day, in a place belonging in history, character, and all its appointments to an age so different, and so long gone by, with all its people and concerns.

Nothing, perhaps, could mark more vividly the vast changes in the manners and circumstances of different ages in England; the wonderful advance in luxury and refinement of the modern ones, than by passing from Hardwick to the old Hall of Haddon, built in 1427, when the feudal system was in its strength;

when the manor-house was but one remove from the castle; to visit this with its rude halls, its massive tables, its floors made from the planks of one mighty oak, its ancient arras and quaint stucco-work; and then pass over to Chatsworth, only a few miles distant, where to the past all the splendour of the present has been added; modern architecture, and all its contrivances for domestic convenience, comfort, and elegance; pictures, statuary, books, magnificent furniture, glowing carpets; everything that the art, wealth, and ingenuity of this great nation can bring together into one princely mansion. But as my limits will not admit of this, I shall content myself with a survey of a more domestic kind, yet connected with the poetical history of our own day—Annesley and Newstead.

CHAPTER VI.

ANNESLEY HALL AND HUCKNALL.

Early in the spring of 1834, we walked over from Nottingham to see Annesley Hall, the birth-place and patrimony of Mary Chaworth; a place made of immortal interest by the early attachment of Lord Byron to this lady, and by the graphic strength and deep passion with which he has recorded in his poems this most influential circumstance of his youth.

Annesley lies about nine miles north of Nottingham, itself—the scene of his first and most lasting attachment—Newstead, his patrimonial abode—and Hucknall, his burial-place; forming the three points of a triangle, each of whose sides may be about two miles in length. Yet although Newstead and Hucknall have been visited by shoals of admirers, this place, perhaps altogether the most interesting of the three, has been wholly neglected. Few, or none of them, have thought it worth while to go so little out of their way to see it; perhaps not one in a hundred has known that it was so near; probably to those who inquired about it, it might be replied, "you see that wooded ridge—there lies Annesley. You see all that

is worth seeing; it is a poor tumble-down place:" and so they have been satisfied, and have returned in their wisdom to their own place, at a hundred, or a thousand miles distance. But what is still more remarkable, while Mr. Murray has sent down an artist into this neighbourhood to make drawings of Hucknall church and Newstead for his Life and Poems of Lord Byron; and while others have encompassed sea and land to give us thrice reiterated landscapes illustrative of his biography and writings, and have even presented us with fictitious portraits of the most interesting characters connected with his fortunes,—they have totally passed over Annesley as altogether unworthy of their notice, though it is a spot, at once, full of a melancholy charm; of a sad, yet old English beauty; a spot, where every sod, and stone, and tree, and hearth is rife with the most strange and touching memories in human existence; and where the genuine likeness of Mary Chaworth, in the most lovely and happy moments of her life, is to be found.

Need I pause a moment to account for this? Does not the discerning public always tread in one track? As sheep follow one leader, and traverse the heath in a long-extended line, so does the public follow the first trumpeter of the praises of one place. It has been fashionable to visit Newstead, and it *has* been visited;—but as Annesley was not at first thought of, it has not been visited at all. Well! we have visited it; and if there be any power in the most melancholy of mortal fortunes—in the retracing the day-dreams of an illustrious spirit—in the gathering of all English feelings round the strongest combination of the glories of nature, with the aspect of decay in the fortunes

and habitation of an ancient race, we shall visit it again and again.*

That wooded ridge was our land-mark from the first step of our journey, and we soon reached Hucknall. The approach to Hucknall is pleasant; the place itself is a long and unpicturesque village. Count Gamba is said to have been struck with its resemblance to Missolonghi. Thirteen years have now passed since the funeral of Lord Byron took place here, and yet it seems to me but as yesterday. His admirers, in after ages, will naturally picture to themselves the church, on that occasion, overflowing with the intelligent and poetical part of the population of the neighbourhood. A poet who had spent a good deal of his boyhood and youth in it—whose patrimonial estate lay here—who had gone hence, and won so splendid a renown—whose life had been a series of circumstances and events as striking and romantic as his poetry—who had finally been cut down in his prime, in so brilliant an attempt to restore the freedom and ancient glory of Greece—would naturally be supposed to come back to the tomb of his ancestors, amidst the confluence of a thousand strongly-excited hearts. But it was not so. There was a considerable number of persons present, but the church was by no means crowded, and the spectators were, with very few exceptions, of that class which is collected by idle curiosity on the approach of any not very wonderful procession; who would have collected to gaze as much at the funeral of his lordship's grandfather, or his own, though

* Since this was published in the Athenæum in the autumn of 1834, Washington Irving has published his interesting visit to Newstead and *Annesley*.

he had not written a line of poetry, or lifted the sword of freedom;—probably, with threefold eagerness at that of a wealthy cit, because there would have been more of bustle and assuming blazonry about it. With the exception of the undertaker's hired company; of Sir John Cam Hobhouse, and his lordship's attorney, Mr. Hanson; his Greek servant Tita, and his old follower Fletcher, the rest of the attendants were the villagers, and a certain number of people from Nottingham, of a similar class, and led by similar motives. There was not a score of those who are called "the respectable" from Nottingham; scarcely one of the gentry of the county. This strange fact can only be accounted for by the circumstance that Nottingham and its vicinity are famous for the manufacture of lace and stockings, but, like many other manufacturing districts, possess no such decided attachment to literature. Many readers there are, undoubtedly, in both town and country, but readers chiefly for pastime—for the filling up of a certain space between and after business—and a laudable way too of so filling it; but not readers from any unconquerable passion for, or attachment to, literature for its own sake. A few literary persons have lived in or about the neighbourhood, but these are the exception; the character of the district is manufacturing and political, but by no means literary, nor ever was; therefore, the strongest feeling with which Lord Byron was regarded there, was a political one. Though an aristocrat in birth and bearing, he was a very thorough radical in principle. Hence, he had only the sympathy of the radicals with him, those consisting chiefly of the working classes. The whigs of the town and the

gentry of the county, chiefly tories, regarded him only in a political light, and paid him not the respect of their presence.

The religious world had a high prejudice against him for his manifold sins of speech, opinion, and life; they of course were not there. No party had so much more admiration of genius—conception of the lofty, intellectual achievements of the noble poet, discernment of the abundant qualifying, and, in fact, overbalancing grace and beauty, and even religious sentiment, which breathed through many of his writings —for no man had more ennobling and truly religious feelings rooted in his soul by the contemplation of the magnificence of God's handiworks in creation ; or felt occasionally, more deeply the spiritualizing influence that pervades nature ;—no party had so much more of this tone of mind, than of their political or sectarian bias, as to forget all those minor things in his wonderful talent—his early death—his redeeming qualities, and last deeds—and the honour he had conferred, as an everlasting heritage, on this country.

In the evening, after the people who had attended the funeral were dispersed, I went down to the church and entered the vault. There was a reporter from one of the London newspapers, copying the inscriptions on the coffins, by the light of a lamp; and a great hobble-de-hoy of a farmer's lad was kneeling on the case that contained the poet's heart, and lolling on the coffin with his elbows, as he watched the reporter, in a manner that indicated the most perfect absence of all thought of the place where he was, or the person on whose remains he was perched.

In the church-yard, a group of the villagers were

eagerly discussing the particulars of the funeral, and the character of the deceased. One man attempted to account for the apparently indifferent manner in which the clergyman performed the burial service, by his having understood that he felt himself disgraced by having to bury an atheist. "An atheist!" exclaimed an old woman, "tell me that he was an atheist! D'ye think an atheist would be beloved by his servants as this man was? Why, they fret themselves almost to death about him. And d'ye think they would have made so much of him in foreign parts? Why, they almost worshipped him as a god in Grecia!" giving the final *a* a sound almost as long as one's finger. This was conclusive—the wondering auditors had nothing to reply—they quietly withdrew their several ways, and I mine.

The church was broken into soon after the funeral, and the black cloth with which the pulpit was hung on this occasion, carried away: and this is not the only forcible entry that has been made through Lord Byron's being buried there; for the clerk told me, that when Moore came to see it, with Colonel Wildman, being impatient of the clerk's arrival, who lives at some distance, the poet had contrived to climb up to a window, open it, and get in, where the worthy bearer of the keys found him, to his great astonishment.

The indifference shewn by the people of Nottingham towards the great poet, would not seem to have abated, if we are to judge by the entries in an album kept by the clerk, and which was presented for that purpose about twelve years ago by Dr. Bowring. The signatures of visitors in 1834 amounted to upwards of eight

hundred, amongst which appear the names of people from North and South America, Russia, the Indies and various other distant places and countries, but few from Nottingham or its shire, who might be supposed to be amongst the best read and best informed portion of its population. This, however, must be allowed, that the names entered in the clerk's book afford no just criterion of the number or quality of the visitors to the poet's tomb, as many of the most poetical and refined minds might naturally feel reluctant to place their signatures in such a medley of mawkish sentiment as is always found in such albums. A few clergymen, we, however, were pleased to see, had there placed their names; and some dissenting ministers had ventured so far as to do likewise, and to preach some pretty little sermons over him in the book, which opens thus:

TO THE
Immortal and Illustrious Fame
OF
LORD BYRON,
THE FIRST POET OF THE AGE IN WHICH HE LIVED,
THESE TRIBUTES,
WEAK, AND UNWORTHY OF HIM,
BUT IN THEMSELVES SINCERE,
Are Inscribed,
WITH THE DEEPEST REVERENCE.
July, 1825.

At this period no monument—not even so simple a slab as records the death of the humblest villager in the neighbourhood,—had been erected to mark the spot in which all that is mortal of the greatest man of our day reposes; and he has been buried more than twelve months.—*July*, 1825.

So should it be : let o'er this grave
No monumental banners wave ;
Let no word speak—no trophy tell
Aught that may break the charming spell,
By which, as on this sacred ground
He kneels, the pilgrim's heart is bound.
A still, resistless influence,
Unseen, but felt, binds up the sense ;
While every whisper seems to breathe
Of the mighty dead who sleeps beneath.
—And though the master-hand is cold,
And though the lyre it once controlled
Rests mute in death ; yet, from the gloom
Which dwells about this holy tomb,
Silence breathes out more eloquent,
Than epitaph or monument.
One laurel wreath—the poet's crown—
Is here by hand unworthy thrown ;
One tear that so much worth should die,
Fills, as I kneel, my sorrowing eye ;
This the simple offering,
Poor, but earnest, which I bring.
The tear has dried ; the wreath shall fade,
The hand that twined it soon be laid
In cold obstruction—but the fame
Of him who tears and wreath shall claim
From most remote posterity,
While Britain lives, can never die!—J. B.

The following list contains almost all the names that are known to the public, or are distinguished by rank or peculiarity of circumstance :—

The Count Pietro Gamba, Jan. 31st, 1825.
The Duke of Sussex visited Lord Byron's tomb, October 1824.
Lieut.-Colonel Wildman.
Lieut.-Colonel Charles Lallemand.
The Count de Blankensee, Chamberlain to the King of Prussia, Sept. 7th, 1825.
1825, Sept. 23. William Fletcher visited his ever-to-be-lamented lord and master's tomb.

1825, 10th month.	Jeremiah Wiffen, Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire.
1826, July 30.	C. R. Pemberton, a wanderer.
1828, Jan. 21.	Thomas Moore.
Sept. 12.	Sir Francis S. Darwin, and party.
Nov. 21.	Lieut.-Colonel D'Aguilar.
———	Eliza D'Aguilar.
Dec. 1.	Lieut.-Colonel James Hughes, of Llysdulles.
1829, Sept. 3.	Lord Byron's Sister, the Honourable Augusta Mary Leigh, visited this church.
1831, May 17.	Rev. Joseph Gilbert, Nottingham.
———	Ann Gilbert, (formerly Ann Taylor of Ongar).
Aug. 22.	Lieut.-Gen. and Mrs. Need, Fountain Dale.
1832, Jan. 8.	M. Van Buren, Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States.
———	Washington Irving.
———	John Van Buren, New York, U. S. America.
Dec. 27.	Lady Lammine, Salendale.
1834, Feb. 15.	Domingo Maria Ruiz de la Vega, Ex-Deputy of the Spanish Cortes, from Granada.
Feb. 23.	J. Bellairs, Esq., visited Newstead Abbey, and Lord Byron's tomb, such as it is—one of his greatest admirers of the day!
———	W. Arundale, of London, accompanied the said J. B.!
March 8.	J. Murray, Jun., Albemarle Street, London.

Although we did not, at this time, enter even the churchyard, thoughts and feelings which had presented themselves in this very spot, on the day of Lord Byron's funeral, again returned.

His birth, his death, dark fortunes, and brief life,
Wondrous and wild as his impetuous lay,
Passed through my mind; his wanderings, loves, and strife;
I saw him marching on from day to day:
The kilted boy, roaming mid mountains grey;
The noble youth, whose life-blood was a flame,
In the bright land of demi-gods astray;
The monarch of the lyre, whose haughty name
Spread on from shore to shore, the watchword of all fame;

And then, a lifeless form! The spell was broke;
The wizard's wild enchantment was destroyed;
He who at will did dreadful forms invoke,
And called up beautiful spirits from the void,
Back to the scenes in which he early joyed,
He came, but knew it not. In vain earth's bloom—
In vain the sky's clear beauty, which oft buoyed
His spirit to delight; an early doom
Brought him in glory's arms to the awaiting tomb.

He lies—how quietly that heart which yet
Never could slumber, slumbers now for aye!
He lies—where first, love, fame, his young soul set
With passionate power on flame; where gleam the grey
Turrets of Newstead, through the solemn sway
Of verdurous woods; and where that hoary crown
Of lofty trees, "in circular array,"
Shrouds Mary's Hall, who thither may look down,
And think how he loved her, ay, more than his renown.

ANNESLEY HALL.

From Hucknall we ascended chiefly through open, wild lands:—to our right the wooded valley of Newstead, every moment spreading itself out more broadly; and before us the forest heights of Annesley, growing more bold and attractive. A wild gusty breeze, and dark flying clouds, added sensibly to the deep solitude and picturesque character of the scene. We soon passed a cottage, having beside it an old brick pillar surmounted with a stone ball, and before it an avenue of lime trees, which appeared some time to have formed the boundary or place of entrance to the park; then a new lodge, and found ourselves at the foot of the steep hill, styled in Byron's Dream

A gentle hill,
Green, and of mild declivity.

The greenness and mildness of declivity, however, we afterwards found were on the side by which Byron and Mary Chaworth had ascended it from her house; on this side it is a remarkably barren and extremely steep hill. However, up we went, and on the summit discovered the strict accuracy of his delineation of it.

> I saw two beings in the hues of youth,
> Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,
> Green, and of mild declivity; the last,
> As 't were the cape of a long ridge of such,
> Save that there was no sea to lave its base,
> But a most living landscape, and the wave
> Of woods and cornfields, and the abodes of men
> Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke
> Arising from such rustic roofs:—the hill
> Was crowned with a peculiar diadem
> Of trees in circular array, so fixed,
> Not by the sport of Nature, but of man.

A most living landscape it is indeed, including all the objects so vividly here given; amongst them, the most conspicuous, the house of his living ancestors, and the house where he has joined them in death; and extending from the woody skirts of Sherwood Forest to the mill-crowned heights of Nottingham. By the way, a strange mistake of Moore's here presented itself. Immediately after the passage just quoted, Byron proceeds to speak further of this young pair, and says:—

> Even *now* she loved another,
> And on the summit of that hill she stood,
> Looking afar, if yet her lover's steed
> Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

Moore, commenting on this, tells us that the image of the lover's steed was suggested by the Nottingham race-ground,—a race-ground actually nine miles off,

and moreover lying in a hollow, and totally hidden from view; had the lady's eyes, indeed, been so marvellously good as to discern a horse nine miles off? Mary Chaworth, in fact, was looking for her lover's steed along the road as it winds up the common from Hucknall.

But a stranger discovery soon made us forget this *Irish bull.* We had no sooner reached the summit of the hill, than to our inexpressible astonishment we found the very trees so strikingly pointed out in this most interesting poem, "the trees in circular array"—cut down! These trees, and none else, cut down! There were the trees crowning the whole length of the "long ridge" standing in their grayness; and there were the stumps of "the trees in circular array" in the earth at our feet! An immediate and irresistable conviction forced itself on our minds; but we write it not; we merely state the fact, that that memorable landmark of love, made interesting to every age by the poetry of passion, had been removed. Our indignation may be imagined when we found that not only had the trees been cut down, but there was an actual attempt to cut down the hill itself, by making a gravel-pit there;—of all places in the world, to think of making a gravel-pit on the top of that steep hill, when it might be got from the bottom of any hill in the neighbourhood. We have since been told that it was the intention of its present possessor, the husband of Mary Chaworth, to have cut down all the trees upon that hill; but that his design was prevented by the interference of his eldest son, to whom the estate descends by entail; and that he was compelled by the spirited conduct of the son, to plant

the hill afresh; but he has complied with the letter, overlooking the spirit of the agreement, in the most perfect style, having planted the sides of the hill all over with fir-trees, so that it will in a short time shroud the place, and smother it completely from the view.*

The indignation we felt on this occasion, perhaps, made us more sensibly alive to the character of the place. Byron, in some juvenile verses, exclaims—

> Hills of Annesley, bleak and barren,
> Where my thoughtless childhood strayed,
> How the northern tempests warring,
> Howl above thy tufted shade.

So strongly did the wind drive over this ridge, that we could scarcely make head against it; and remembering to have heard of a temple which formerly crowned this hill, but had been blown down either by tempest or war, we looked amongst the broken ground, and perceived considerable remains of masonry, probably the foundations of the temple: nor can a finer situation for such an erection be imagined.

The trees which crowned "the ridge," and which, at a distance, appeared large, we soon saw, were of stunted growth, with tops curled, and sturdy, as if accustomed to wrestle with the tempests. An avenue of them stretched away into distant woods. Large decayed branches lay here and there beneath, indicating a solitude and neglect of the place pleasing to

* Mentioning the felling of these trees to a mechanic soon afterwards,—"Trees," I added, "that might be seen so far." "Seen, sir!" he exclaimed, "those trees were seen all over the world!" He meant through the medium of Byron's poetry. It was an expression, and accompanied by energy of feeling, that would have done honour to any man.

the imagination. Before us, across a descending slope—the hill of mild and green declivity—extended, right and left, noble woods; and in the midst of them, in the midst of a smaller crescent of wood, we descried the tall grey chimneys and ivy-covered walls and gables of the old Hall, and the top of the church-tower. We hastened down, observing on our left, in an old forest-slope, a large herd of deer, which had a good effect,—and struck into a footpath that led directly up towards the house. As we drew nearer, the old building, hung with luxuriant ivy and shrouded among tall trees, far over-topping its tall chimneys; amid shrubberies of wondrous growth of evergreens, among which are conspicuous, three remarkable ilexes, with black-green foliage crowning their short thick black trunks, and with grassy openings sloping down to the warm south—struck us forcibly with its picturesque and silent beauty. We found ourselves now, apparently at the back of a high garden-wall, by the side of which ran a row of lime trees, which seemed at one time to have been pollarded and trained espalier-wise, but had now sent up heads of a luxuriant and fantastic growth. On our other hand, lay a wood, from which the thickets being cleared away, left us ample view of its ivy-mantled trees, and the ground beneath them one green expanse of dog's-mercury and fresh leaves of the blue-bell. Tufts of primroses were scattered all about, and the wood-anemonies trembled in the wind. But over all, such a mantle of deep silence seemed cast, that it reminded us of some enchanted place in the fairy and forest-stories of Tieck.

At the top of this road, turning suddenly to the left, we found ourselves before

> The massy gate of that old hall,

from which Byron declares that,

> Mounting his steed he went his way,
> And ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more.

But all was silent and lifeless. No person was to be discerned in the court to which it opened; there were no signs of life except in the cooing of some pigeons and the cawing of certain jackdaws. We went round the outbuildings into the churchyard, which is level with the top of the court-wall, and looks directly into it. We leaned over a massy parapet, and looked down into this court; the spell of an invincible silence seemed to cover the whole place. In the gravel walks which ran round the court, there were traces of carriage wheels; but you felt as if no carriage with the bustle and vivacity of active life could ever more enter there. In the centre of the grass-plot, a basin, surrounded by a hedge of honeysuckle, and which had doubtless once possessed the life and beauty of a fountain, now shewed only water, black, stagnant, and covered with masses of yellow moss. We were close to the house; its curtained windows gave it an air of habitation; but no sound nor visible indication of the presence of man was about it. We walked along the green and picturesque churchyard: the back of the buildings on this side of the court bounded part of it; they were in the last state of decay; wide gaps in the roof gave us a view into dark and dreary stables. We came to the farm-yard, also joining the churchyard: it had the same aspect of desertion. There

was neither cattle nor ricks in it, but the brandreth, or frame on which a rick once stood, littered with decaying straw, and its air of desolation made more striking by a piece of old wooden balustrade cast upon it. There were barn-doors standing wide open; and the litter of the yard even appeared dusty and grey with age. You felt sure no human foot could have disturbed it for years. We descended from the churchyard, and went round the farm-buildings once more towards the old "massy gate." At the back of these buildings were nailed the trophies of the game-keeper by hundreds, we might, we think, say thousands; wild cats, dried to blackness, stretched their downward heads and legs from the wall; hawks, magpies, and jays, hung in tattered remnants; but all grey and even green with age; and the heads of birds in plenteous rows, nailed beak upward, were dried and shriveled by the sun, and winds, and frosts of many summers and winters, till their distinctive characters were lost. They all seemed to speak the same silent language:—to say, Ay, this was once the abode of a prosperous old family; here were abundance of friends, and dependents going to and fro; horses and hounds going forth in vociferous joy; abroad was the chase and the sound of the gun,—within were spits turning, and good fellowship; but all this is long since over—a blight and a sorrow have fallen here.

We now approached the "massy gateway" by a wide entrance, which a pair of great doors had once closed—one of these had fallen from its hinges, and the other swung in the wind, banging against its post with a hollow sound, whose echoes told of vacancy.

Above the gateway, the vane on the cupola turned to and fro in the gusty air, with a dreary queek-quake, queek-quake: all besides was still. We stood and looked at each other with an expression that said—Did you ever see anything like this? At this moment an old grey dog came softly out of the court—the first living thing we had seen, except the jackdaws and the pigeons; quietly he came, as if he too felt the nature of his abode. It was with no vivacity of action, or noisy bark: he stood and silently wagged his tail; and as we drew near him, as silently retreated into the court. We entered this silent place, and looked around. The house formed its western end; stables and coach-houses formed its north and eastern sides; the south was open to the shrubbery. The ivy hung in huge masses from all the walls. In the eastern end was the "massy gateway" mentioned by Byron, arched over, and surmounted by a clock and cupola. So profoundly lifeless and deserted seemed the place, that though the clock-finger pointed to the true time of the day—exactly half-past twelve o'clock—our imaginations refused for some time to believe that the clock could actually be going: we felt positive astonishment when it proved to us that it really did.

We now resolved to ascertain at the house itself, if it had any living inhabitants; and on approaching the hall-door, we heard a sound in a stable; we went in, and descried, in a dismal room adjoining it, a man sitting by a fire in a corner, and a dog lying on the hearth. The man and the place were alike forlorn. They were dirty, squalid, desolate. We had said, who could have supposed so abandoned a spot so near

Nottingham? but who could have imagined so wild and banditti-like a being, as that man within so short a distance of a large town? His dress and person had every character of reckless neglect; his black hair hung about his pale face; he had no handkerchief about his neck; he sate and devoured his dinner, which he appeared to have cooked with his own hands, looking up at us with a ruffian stupidity, as he answered our questions with a surly bluntness, without ceasing to help himself, with a large pocket-knife, and no fork, to his meal. He told us we could not see the house—master never let it be seen. When asked, why? he could not tell—but it was so; but we might ask the old woman in the house. Away we went, and a jewel of an old woman we found.

She was the very *beau ideal* of an old servant; all simplicity, fidelity, full of the history of the family; wrapped up in its fortunes and its honours—a part and parcel of the race and place, for she had been in the family above sixty years,—being taken, as she said, when she was ten years old, by Mary Chaworth's grandfather, and put to school, and taught to read and write, to mark and to flower; for she would, he said, be a nice sharp girl to wait on him. "Oh! he was a pretty man—a very pretty, well-behaved gentleman," said she with a sigh. Old Nanny Marsland, for such was her name, seemed a pure and unsophisticated creature; the regular influx of visitors had not spoiled her; the curious and the pert, and the idle, the insolent and the foolish, had not troubled the clear sincere current of her thoughts; had not made her heart and spirit turn inward, in self-defence, and converted her into the subtle and parrot shew-woman.

She never dreamt of anything being blameable that had been done by any of *the family*. She delighted to talk of the Hall and its people; and feeling her solitude,—for she was the sole regular occupant,—some one to talk to was a luxury. Could we have hoped for a creature more to our hearts' desire? Under her guidance we progressed through this most interesting old place; thoughts and feelings, never to be forgotten, springing up at every step.

The house is not large; and desertion had stamped within, the same characters as on all without. Damp had disfigured the walls; a fire of cheerful pine-logs blazed in the hall and in the kitchen; but everywhere else was the chill and gloom of the old neglected mansion. All the more modern furniture, and most of the paintings, had been removed, and thereby the keeping of the abode was but the better preserved. We know not how to describe the feelings with which we traversed these rooms. It was as if the hall of one of our old English families had been hidden beneath a magic cloud for ages, and suddenly revealed to our eyes, now, at a time when everything belonging to this country is so much changed;—houses, men, manners and opinions. When we entered the old-fashioned family hall, standing as it stood ages ago, furnished as it was ages ago, with its antique stove, its antique sofas, if so they can be called, made of wood carved, and curiously painted, and cushioned with scarlet, standing on each side of the fire; the antique French time-piece on its bracket; its various old cabinets and tables standing by walls; and its floor of large and small squares of alternating black marble and white stone—the domestic sanctuary of a race whom we regard as our pro-

genitors, but widely different to ourselves, seemed suddenly revealed to us, and we could almost have expected to see the rough, boisterous squire, or the stately baron, issue from one of the side-doors; or to hear the rustling of the silken robe of some long-waisted dame, who could occasionally leap a five-barred gate as readily as she could dance at the Christmas festival; or one of high and solemn beauty, in whom devotion deep, uninquiring and undoubting, was the great principle and passion of life; to whom the domestic chapel was a holy place; the chaplain her daily counsellor; and the distribution of alms her daily occupation. We saw before us the hearthstone of a race that lived in the full enjoyment of aristocratic ascendancy, when rank was old and undisputed; when neither mercantile wealth had pressed on their nobility on the one hand, nor popular knowledge and rights on the other; when the gentry lived only to be reverenced and obeyed, every one in the midst of his own forests and domains as a king, and led forth his tenants and serfs to the wars of his country, or to the chase of his own wide wilds; when field sports and jovial feastings, and love-making, were the life-employment of men and women, who took rank and power as an unquestioned heritage, and never troubled their brain with gathering knowledge: and all below them were supposed to be happy, because they were ignorant and submissive.

This hall which occupies the centre of the building, is nearly sixty feet long by thirty wide, supported by two elliptic arches and Ionic pillars. The middle of the room is now occupied by a billiard table, which formerly stood in an upper room, called the terrace-

room, of which we shall speak presently. At the lower end of this hall an easy flight of steps leads to the upper apartments. Near the fire, at the upper end, a few steps lead into a beautiful little breakfast-room, which looks out into the garden, and forms one of the projections of the building, the staircase at the lower end forming the other: the three large, old-fashioned windows which light the hall, lying on this side, and looking out into a little parterre, fenced off with a trellis-fence, even with the two projections we have spoken of—such a parterre as one often meets with, belonging to old houses—a little favoured sanctuary of garden-ground, where choice flowers were trained, and which was the especial care of page and gardener, before ladies took to gardening themselves. This, which is now a perfect wilderness, almost overrun with shrubs and the tall tree-like laurels which encumber wall and window, and almost exclude daylight from the hall, to the great annoyance of our good old woman, was once, as was fitting, the favourite flower-garden of Mary Chaworth.

The little breakfast-room we mentioned, looks out not only by a side window into the parterre, but also by two large, low windows into the garden; a fine old garden, with a fine stately old terrace, one of the noblest it was ever our good fortune to see, and such a one as Danby or Turner would be proud to enrich their fine pictures with. In this room were a few family portraits. One a small full-length figure, which the old woman very significantly told us was Byron's Chaworth; that is, the Chaworth killed by the poet's grandfather in a duel. Another portrait she informed us was the last Lord Chaworth; for this

estate, which had been in the family of the Annesleys from the time of the Conquest, came into that of Lord Viscount Chaworth of Armagh, in Ireland, by the marriage of one of his ancestors with the sole heiress, Alice de Annesley, in the reign of Henry VI. "And this," she said, pointing to a female portrait, "was his lawful wife." "What then," we said, "there was an unlawful wife, was there?" "Yes," she added, "she is here." We glanced at the picture placed in the shady corner by the window, next, however, to Lord Chaworth, and exclaimed, "and a good judge was his Lordship too!" A creature of most perfect and wondrous beauty it was that we beheld. What a fine, rich, oval countenance, and noble forehead slightly shaded by auburn locks! what large dark eyes of inexpressible expression! what a soft, delicate, yet beautiful and sunny complexion! what a beautiful rounding of the cheek, chin, and throat! what exquisite features! what a perfect mixture of nobility of mind, with elegance and simplicity of taste. Never did we behold a more enchanting vision of youth and beauty; and all this hidden for generations in a dark nook of this old hall, unmentioned, and unknown. It were worth a journey from London but to gaze upon. Beautiful as this portrait is, it represents a mole upon either cheek; but this, instead of detracting from the loveliness of the face, as might be imagined, only appears to give it character and individuality, and vouches for the fidelity of the likeness. The painting, too, is extremely well done; far superior to anything else in the house, except it be the satin petticoat of a Miss Burdett in the terrace-room. "And who," we inquired, "was this charming crea-

ture?" "She was a girl of the village, sir," was the reply. "What! could the village produce a creature like her?" "Yes: his Lordship took her into the house as a servant; but she did not like him, and went away: however, he got her afterwards, and built a house for her on the estate, and she had one child. But she died, poor thing! all was not right somehow; and all her money she put in a cupboard for her son,—they would shew you the cupboard in the house to this day; and on the very night she died, her own relations came and took away the money;—things weren't as they should have been, poor thing! and she came again." "What, was this the lady that we have heard an old man say, came up out of a well, and sat in a tree by moonlight, combing her hair?" "No, Lord bless you! that was another; but the parson *laid her*, and the well is covered in; but for all that she walks yet!" We smiled at the good woman's very orthodox belief in ghosts; but we know not whether we should not be apt to catch the contagion of superstitious feeling, if we were to dwell all alone in this old house as she does, and hear the winds howling and sighing about it at night; the long ivy rustling about the windows, and dashing against the panes; and the owls hooting about in many a wild, piercing, and melancholy tone; and feel oneself in the unparticipated solitude of those ancient rooms, with all their strange and sad memories.

Besides this portrait of the beautiful and unhappy Mrs. Milner, we bestowed a look of great interest on one of much attraction, the daughter of Viscount Chaworth—not beautiful, but full of the fascination of cultivated mind, and of a heart so living and loving,

that it caused the eyelids to droop over their beamy orbs, with an expression that made you tremble for the peace of its possessor. One other picture attracted our attention from its singularity. It represents a landscape, apparently, "the hill of green and mild declivity," the line of trees, and the trees in circular array, from among which rises the temple we spoke of before, and which our cicerone assured us had been considered "the finest in all England, but had been blown down in Oliver Cromwell's days." In the foreground stands, as if painted in enamel, a gentleman in a strange sort of dress-jerkin, of white satin, with a short petticoat of purple velvet bordered with gold lace. On his right hand his amazonian lady, half the head taller than himself, clad in a riding-dress of green, bordered likewise with gold-lace; and on either side of them a son, in the full-dress of William and Mary's reign; with powdered wigs, long-lapped scarlet coats, waistcoats, and breeches, with white silk stockings on their neat little legs, and lace ruffles at their hands, each with his little head turned on one side;—the one caressing a fawn, the other a greyhound; and the family group completed by the groom standing a little behind, holding the lady's palfry ready saddled for her use. These, and a portrait of the son of Lord Chaworth, are all the family pictures which the house contains.

Leaving then this room, we re-crossed the hall, and ascending the staircase at the lower end, entered the drawing-room, which is over the hall—a handsome room, and the best furnished in the house. The most interesting piece of furniture it contains, or perhaps, which the house itself contains, is a screen covered

over with a great number of cuttings in black paper, done by a Mrs. Goodchild, and representing a great variety of family incidents and character—those little passing incidents in life, which, though rarely chronicled, are most influential on its fortunes—on which often its very destiny hangs. The receipt of a letter—the first meeting—the last parting—how much do these things involve! Here we were introduced to Mary Chaworth, the lovely and graceful maiden, full of hope, and life, and gaiety; with her friends and dependents about her; at the very time when Lord Byron became attached to her. Of the accuracy of this likeness we have no doubt, from the wonderful fidelity of some of the others, with whose persons we are acquainted.

In one place she is represented as sitting in a room, her attitude one of terror. A man is before her presenting a pistol, and a little terrified page is concealing himself under a table. In another she sits with her mother and a gentleman at tea; a footman behind waiting upon them. Again, she is in

the gardens or grounds, walking with her cousin, Miss Radford; her rustic hat thrown back upon her shoulders; her beautiful head turned aside; and her hand put forth to receive a letter from a page, kneeling on one knee,—a letter from her lover and subsequent husband.

Again, she is playing with a little child; and in all, her figure is full of exquisite grace and vivacity, and the profile of the face remarkably fine. It is impossible to say with what intense interest we examined these memorials of private life; these passages so full of vitality and character, incidental, but important—the very essence of an autobiography.

From the drawing-room we passed to the one called the terrace-room, from its opening by a glass door upon the terrace, which runs along the top of the garden at right angles with the house, and level with this second story, descending to the garden by a double flight of broad stone steps, in the middle of its length, which is about eighty yards. This room formerly contained the billiard table, and in it Mary Chaworth and her noble lover passed much time. He was fond of the terrace, and used to pace backwards and forwards upon it, and amuse himself with shooting with a pistol at a door. It was here that she last saw him, with the exception of a dinner-visit, after his return from his travels. It was here that he took his last leave of Mary Chaworth, when

> He went his way,
> And ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more.

It was here, then, those ill-fated ones stood, and lingered, and conversed, for at least two hours. Mary

Chaworth was here all life and spirit, full of youth, and beauty, and hope. What a change fell upon her after-life! She now stood here, the last scion of a time-honoured race, with large possessions, with the fond belief of sharing them in joy with the chosen of her life. Never did human life present a sadder contrast! There are many reasons why we should draw a veil over this mournful history, much of which will never be known; suffice it to say, that it was not without most real, deep, and agonizing causes, that years after,

> In her home, her native home,
> She dwelt begirt with growing infancy,
> Daughters and sons of beauty,—but behold!
> Upon her face there was the tint of grief,
> The settled shadow of an inward strife,
> And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
> As if its lid was charged with unshed tears.

It was not without a fearful outraging of trusting affections, the desolation of a spirit trodden and crushed by that which should have shielded it, that

> She was changed
> As by the sickness of the soul: her mind
> Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes
> They had not their own lustre, but the look
> Which is not of the earth; she was become
> The queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts
> Were combinations of disjointed things;
> And forms impalpable and unperceived
> Of others' sight, familiar were to hers.

There must have come a day, a soul-prostrating day, when she must have felt the grand mistake she had made, in casting away a heart that never ceased to love her and sorrow for her, and a mind that wrapt her, even severed as it was from her, in an imperishable halo of glory.

There is nothing in all the histories of broken affections and mortal sorrows, more striking and melancholy than the idea of this lady, so bright and joyous-hearted in her youth, sitting in her latter years, for days and weeks, alone and secluded, uninterrupted by any one, in this old house, weeping over the poems which commented in burning words on the individual fortunes of herself and Lord Byron—

> The one
> To end in madness—both in misery.

With this idea vividly impressed on our spirits, a darker shade seemed to settle down on those antiquated rooms;—we passed out into the garden, at the door at which Byron passed; we trod that stately terrace, and gazed at the old vase placed in the centre of its massy balustrade, bearing the original escutcheon of the Lord Chaworth, and stands a brave object as seen from the garden, into which we descended, and wandered among its high-grown evergreens. But everything was tinged with the spirit and fate of that unhappy lady. The walks were overgrown with grass; and tufts of snowdrop leaves, now grown wild and shaggy, as they do after the flower is over, grew in them; and tufts of a beautiful and peculiar kind of fumitory, with its pink bloom, and the daffodils and primroses of early spring looked out from amongst the large forest trees that surround the garden. Everything, even the smallest, seemed in unison with that great spirit of silence and desolation which hovered over the place; and the gusty winds that swept the long wood-walk by which we came away, gave us a most fitting adieu.

CHAPTER VII.

NEWSTEAD.

We left Annesley, as we have said, by that long wood-walk which leads to the Mansfield road; and advancing on that road about a mile, then turned to the right through a deep defile down into the fields. Here we found ourselves in an extensive natural amphitheatre, surrounded by bold declivities—in some places bleak and barren, in others, richly embossed with furze and broom. Before us, at the distance of another mile, lay Newstead amid its woods, across a moory flat. The wind whistled and sighed amongst the dry, white, wiry grass of last year's growth, as we walked along; and a solitary heron, with slow strokes of its ample wings, flew athwart—not our path, for path we had none, having been tempted into the fields by the beauty of the scene. We followed the course of a little stream, clear as crystal, and swift as human life, and soon found ourselves at the tail of the lake so often referred to by Lord Byron.

> Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
> Broad as transparent, deep and freshly fed
> By a river, which its softened way did take
> In currents through the calmer water spread

Around; the wild fowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed:
The woods sloped downward to its brink, and stood
With their green faces fixed upon the flood.

It was a scene that would have delighted Bewick for its picturesque sedgyness. The streams that fed it came down a woody valley shaggy with sedge—the lake thereabout being bordered with tall masses of it. There was a little island all overgrown with it, and water-loving trees; and wild fowl in abundance were hastening to hide themselves in its covert, or arose and flew around with a varied clangour. Another moment, and we passed a green knoll, and were in front of the Abbey. John Evelyn, who once visited it, was much struck with the resemblance between its situation and that of Fontainbleau.

Here all was neat and habitable—had an air of human life and human attention about it, that formed a strong contrast to the scene of melancholy desolation we had left; and also to this same scene when I visited it years ago, at the time when it was sold, I believe, to a Mr. Claughton, who afterwards, for some cause or other, threw up the bargain. To give an idea of the impression this place made upon me, I shall merely refer to an account furnished by me many years ago to a periodical of the time, which account was partly quoted by Galt in his Life of Lord Byron, and made liberal use of by Moore, though without acknowledgment. I was a boy, rambling through the woods nutting, when suddenly, I came in front of the Abbey, which I had never seen before, and learned from a peasant who happened to be near, that I might get to see it for the value of an ounce of

tobacco given to old Murray, a grey-headed old man —who had been in the family from a boy, and who now, at his own request, lies buried in Hucknall churchyard, as close to the family vault as it was possible to lay him. He and a maid-servant were then the only inmates of the place, being left to superintend the removal of the goods. I marched up to the dismal-looking porch in front, to which you ascended by a flight of steps, and gave a thundering knock, which almost startled me by the hollow sound it seemed to send through the ancient building. After a good waiting, some one approached, and began to withdraw bars and bolts, and to let fall chains; and presently, the old grey-headed man opened the massy door cautiously, to a width just sufficient to enable him to see who was there. Finding nothing more formidable than a boy, he opened wide, and I inquired if I could see the place. The old man first looked at me, and then around, and said, "How many are there of you?" As he was evidently calculating the probable amount of profit, I gave him such evidence of sufficient reward that his doors instantly flew open, and he desired me to wander where I pleased, till he could return to me, having left some important affair *in medias res.* Here then was a wilderness of an old house thrown open to me, and the effect it had on my youthful imagination is indescribable.

The embellishments which the abbey had received from his lordship, had more of the brilliant conception of the poet in them than of the sober calculations of common life. I passed through many rooms which he had superbly finished, but over which he had per-

mitted so wretched a roof to remain, that, in about half a dozen years, the rain had visited his proudest chambers; the paper had rotted on the walls, and fell in comfortless sheets upon glowing carpets and canopies; upon beds of crimson and gold; clogging the glittering wings of eagles, and dishonouring coronets. From many rooms the furniture was gone. In the entrance hall alone remained the paintings of his old friends—the dog and bear.

> The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
> With more of the romantic than had been
> Elsewhere preserved; the cloisters still were stable,
> The cells too and refectory I ween;
> An exquisite small chapel had been able
> Still unimpaired to decorate the scene;
> The rest had been reformed, replaced, or sunk,
> And spoke more of the baron than the monk.
>
> Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, joined
> By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
> Might shock a connoisseur; but, when combined,
> Formed a whole, which, irregular in parts,
> Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
> At least, of those whose eyes are in their hearts.

The long and gloomy gallery, which, whoever views will be strongly reminded of Lara, as indeed a survey of this place will awake more than one scene in that poem,—had not yet relinquished the sombre pictures of its ancient race—

> That frowned
> In rude, but antique portraiture around.

In the study, which is a small chamber overlooking the garden, the books were packed up; but there remained a sofa, over which hung a sword in a gilt sheath; and at the end of the room opposite the window, stood a pair of light fancy stands, each sup-

porting a couple of the most perfect and finely-polished skulls I ever saw; most probably selected, along with the far-famed one converted into a drinking-cup, and inscribed with some well-known verses, from a vast number taken from the abbey cemetery, and piled up in the form of a mausoleum, but since re-committed to the ground. Between them hung a gilt crucifix.

To those skulls he evidently alludes in Lara, where he makes his servants ask one another—

> Why gazed he so upon the ghastly head,
> Which hands profane had gathered from the dead,
> That still beside his open volume lay,
> As if to startle all save him away?

And they most probably suggested that fine passage in Childe Harold—

> Remove yon skull from out those shattered heaps:
> Is that a temple where a God may dwell?
> Why, even the worm at last disdains her shattered cell!
>
> Look on its broken arch, its ruined wall,
> Its chambers desolate, and portals foul;
> Yes, this was once ambition's airy hall,
> The dome of thought, the palace of the soul;
> Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
> The gay recess of wisdom and of wit,
> And passion's host, that never brooked control:
> Can all, saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
> People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?

In the servants' hall, lay a stone coffin, in which were fencing gloves and foils; and on the wall of the ample but cheerless kitchen, was painted in large letters, "Waste not, want not."

During a great part of his Lordship's minority, the abbey was in the occupation of Lord Grey de Ruthen,

his hounds, and divers colonies of jackdaws, swallows, and starlings. The internal traces of this Goth were swept away; but without, all appeared as rude and unreclaimed as he could have left it. I must confess, that if I was astonished at the heterogeneous mixture of splendour and ruin within, I was more so at the perfect uniformity of wildness without. I never had been able to conceive poetic genius in its domestic bower, without figuring it, diffusing the polish of its delicate taste on everything about it. But here the spirit of beauty seemed to have dwelt, but not to have been caressed;—it was the spirit of the wilderness. The gardens were exactly as their late owner described them in his earliest poems:—

Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle;
Thou the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay;
In thy once-smiling gardens the hemlock and thistle,
Now choke up the rose, that late bloomed in the way.

With the exception of the dog's tomb—a conspicuous and elegant object, placed on an ascent of several steps, crowned with a lambent flame, and panelled with white marble tablets, of which that containing the celebrated epitaph was removed, I do not recollect the slightest trace of culture, or improvement. The late lord, a stern and desperate character, who is never mentioned by the neighbouring peasants without a significant shake of the head, might have returned and recognized everything about him, except, perchance, an additional crop of weeds. There still gloomily slept the old pond, into which he is said to have hurled his lady in one of his fits of fury, whence she was rescued by the gardener; a courageous blade, who was the lord's master, and chastised

him for his barbarity. There still, at the end of the garden, in a grove of oak, two towering satyrs—he with his club, and Mrs. Satyr, with her chubby, cloven-footed brat, placed on pedestals at the intersections of the narrow and gloomy pathways, struck for a moment, with their grim visages, and silent, shaggy forms, the fear into your bosoms, which is felt by the neighbouring peasantry at "*the old lord's devils.*"

In the lake below the abbey, the artificial rock, which he piled at a vast expense, still reared its lofty head; but the frigate which fulfilled old Mother Shipton's prophecy, by sailing on dry land to this place from a distant port, had long vanished; and the only relics of his naval whim were this rock, and his ship-boy, the venerable old Murray, who accompanied me round the premises. The dark, haughty, impetuous, and mad deeds of this nobleman, the poet's grandfather, no doubt, by making a vivid impression on his youthful fancy, furnished some of the principal materials for the formation of his lordship's favourite and ever-recurring poetical hero. His manners and acts are the theme of many a winter's evening in that neighbourhood. In one of his paroxysms of wrath, he shot his coachman, for giving, in his opinion, an improper precedence, threw the corpse into the carriage, to his lady, mounted, and drove himself. In a quarrel, which originally arose out of a dispute between their gamekeepers, he killed his neighbour, Mr. Chaworth, the lord of the adjoining manor. This rencontre took place at the Star and Garter, Pall-Mall, after a convivial meeting—a club of Nottinghamshire gentlemen. His lordship was committed to the Tower,

and on April 16th, 1765, placed at the bar of the House of Lords, and without one dissentient voice, convicted of manslaughter, and discharged on paying his fees, having pleaded certain privileges under a statute of Queen Anne. The particulars may be seen in Vol. X. of State Trials, published by order of the House of Peers.

The old lord, from some cause of irritation against his son, said to be on account of his marriage, who died before coming to the title, did all he could to injure the estate. He is said to have pulled down a considerable part of the house, and sold the materials; he cut down very extensive plantations, and sold the young trees to the bakers of Nottingham to heat their ovens with, or to the nurserymen; two of which, Lombardy poplars, bought at that time, now stand at the head of a fish-pond of my father's, grown to an immense size.

Mr. Moore has justly remarked, that Lord Byron derived the great peculiarities of his character from his ancestors. After I came away from the abbey, I asked many people in the neighbourhood what sort of a man the noble poet had been. The impression of his energetic but eccentric character was obvious in their reply. "He is the deuce of a fellow for strange fancies; he flogs the old lord to nothing: but he is a hearty good fellow for all that."

One of these fancies, as related by the miller at the head of the lake, was, to get into a boat, with his two noble Newfoundland dogs, row into the middle of the lake, then dropping the oars, tumble into the water. The faithful animals would immediately follow, seize him by the collar, one on each side, and bear him to

land. This miller told me that every month he came to be weighed, and if he found himself lighter, he appeared highly delighted; but if heavier, he went away in obvious ill humour, and without saying a word. At this time even, *i. e.* before he came of age, he had the greatest horror of corpulency, to which he deemed himself hereditarily prone, and used to lie a certain time every day in a hot-bed, made on purpose, to reduce himself. The master-builder, who had been engaged in the restoration of the abbey, said much about a certain *Kaled*, who then was with him,—probably the same that accompanied him to Brighton, as his younger brother,—and of the wild life kept up, and mad pranks played off, by him and his companions. He described the mornings passing in the most profound quiet, for his Lordship and his guests did not rise till about one o'clock; in the afternoon, the place was all alive with them;—they were seen careering in all directions; at midnight, the old abbey was all lit up, and resounded with their jollity. On one occasion, they were called up to extricate an unfortunate wight from the old stone coffin, where, in some of their mad pranks, he had secreted himself, and fitted it so well, that it was with difficulty he was drawn out, amid the merriment of his comrades. No person, indeed, could form any correct notion of Byron from his poetry, till the publication of his Don Juan, which exhibits more of the style of his youthful conversational manner than any other of his writings, except his journal. I have heard a lady who used to see him at Mrs. Byron's, at Nottingham, say that he was then, in his teens, a most rackety fellow; was very fond of going into the kitchen, and baking oat-

meal cakes on the fireshovel; on which occasions, the cook would sometimes pin a napkin to his coat, which being discovered on his return to the parlour, he would rush out and pursue the maids in all directions, and, to use the lady's phrase, turn the house upside down. When they went away, he always took care to ask the servants if his mother had given them anything; and on their replying in the negative, he would say, "No, no! I knew that well enough;" when he would make them a handsome present.

Such anecdotes of his youth abound; but one is too characteristic to be omitted. An old man of the name of Kemp, of Farnsfield, was one day in Southwell, when a dog in the minster-yard fell upon his little dog. He was beating it off, when a genteel boy came up, and in a very decided tone said, "Let them fight it out—they find their own clothes, don't they?" The old man said, clothes or no clothes, his dog should not be worried. A stander-by asked him if he knew to whom he spoke. The old man said he neither knew nor cared. "It is Lord Byron," said the person; but the old man said he did not care whether he was a lord or a duke, they should not worry his dog; and having got his little dog under his arm, he marched off in none of the best humour. Some time afterwards, however, seeing "Hours of Idleness and other Poems, by Lord Byron," advertised, he recollected the spirit of the lad with so much admiration, that he took his stick and set off to Newark to purchase the book, and always afterwards remained a great admirer of his works.

Such was my acquaintance with the place then; it is now a good, substantial, and very comfortable family mansion. With its external appearance the public is

well acquainted through various prints; and the only objects in the interior, which can much interest strangers as connected with the history of Lord Byron are equally familiar. The picture of his wolf-dog, and his Newfoundland-dog—the living Newfoundland-dog which he had with him in Greece; the skull-cup kept in a cabinet in the drawing-room, and the little chapel and cloisters mentioned by him. There are also in a lumber-room the identical stone coffin and the foils I saw there twenty years ago, and a portrait of old Murray smoking his pipe. There is also the well-known portrait by Phillips. A full-length likeness of him as about to embark on his first travels, which was in the drawing-room at that time, is now gone, but has been engraved for Mr. Murray's edition of his Life and Works.

It is fortunate for the public that the place has fallen into the hands of a gentleman who affords the utmost facility for the inspection of it by strangers. Nothing can exceed the easy courtesy with which it is thrown open to them; and, as an old schoolfellow of Lord Byron's, we believe Colonel Wildman is as desirous as any man can be not to obliterate any traces of his Lordship's former life here. There are some particulars, however, in which I think this care might have been carried more thoroughly into act. In the first place, I think a style of architecture in restoring the abbey might have been adopted more abbey-like—more in keeping with the old part of it—and more consonant to the particular state of feeling with which admirers of the noble poet's genius would be likely to approach it. To my taste it is too square and massy in its *tout ensemble*. I do not see why the architect,

whoever he was, should have gone back in the date of his style beyond that of the ancient remains. The old western front is a specimen of what Rickman calls the early English order of Anglo-Gothic architecture; so light, so airy, so pure and beautiful, that the juxtaposition of a heavy Norman style, and especially of the ponderous, square, and stunted tower at the south-west corner, is strange, and anything but pleasing. A greater variety of outline—the projection of porches and buttresses—the aspiring altitude of pointed gables —clustered chimneys, and slender, sky-seeking turrets would certainly have given greater effect. Instead of a square mass of stone, as it appears at a distance, it would have proclaimed its own beauty to the eye from every far-off point at which it may be discovered. Any one who has seen Fonthill, Abbotsford from the Galashiel's road, or Ilam from the entrance of Dovedale, may imagine how much more that effect would be in accordance, not only with a low situation, but with the mental impressions of a poetic visitor.

I cannot help, too, regretting that the poet's study should now be converted into a common bed-room; and most of all, that the antique fountain which stood in front of the abbey, and makes so strong a feature in the very graphic picture of the place drawn in Don Juan, should be removed. It now adorns the inner quadrangle, or cloister court, and is certainly a very beautiful object there, as may be seen by the print in Murray's edition of Byron's Works. I do not wonder at Colonel Wildman desiring to grace this court with a fountain, but I wonder extremely at his gracing it with *this* fountain. I must for ever deplore its

removal, as the breaking up of that most vivid picture of the front, given by the poet to all posterity :—

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile,
While yet the church was Rome's, stood half apart,
In a grand arch, which once screened many an aisle.
These last had disappeared—a loss to art;
The first yet frowned superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourned the power of time's or tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable arch.

Within a niche nigh to its pinnacle,
Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone:
And these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
But in the war which struck Charles from his throne.
* * * * * * *
But in a higher niche, alone, but crowned,
The Virgin Mother of the God-born child,
With her son in her blessed arms, looked round,
Spared by some chance, when all beside was spoiled;
She made the earth below seem holy ground.
This may be superstition weak, or wild;
But even the painted relics of a shrine
Of any worship, wake some thoughts divine.

A mighty window, hollow in the centre;
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
Through which the deepened glories once could enter,
Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,
Now yawns all desolate: now loud, now fainter,
The gale sweeps through its fretwork; and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
Lie with their hallelujahs quenched like fire.

Amid the court a Gothic fountain played,
Symmetrical, but decked with carvings quaint—
Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here, perhaps, a monster, there a saint:
The spring gushed through grim mouths, of granite made,
And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

It was seeing how exactly all this was a copy of the original—how there stood the mighty window, showing through it the garden and dog's tomb—how the Virgin there still stood aloft with her child, distinct, bold, and beautiful—but the fountain was gone, that we could not help loudly expressing our regret. When the valet who attended us came to the inner-court, "there," he said, "you see is the fountain—it is all there, quite perfect." "Yes, yes," we could not help replying, "that is the very thing we are sorry for—its being all there. A man might cut off his nose, and put it in his pocket, and when any one wondered at his mutilated face, cry, 'O, it is all here; I have it in my pocket.' The mischief would be, it would be in the wrong place, and his face would be spoiled for ever. To every visiter of taste, the abbey front must be thus injured whilst it and the poet's description of it, last together.

These are things to regret; for the rest, the place is a very pleasant place. The new stone-work is very substantially and well done; there is a great deal of modern elegance about the house; a fortune must have been spent upon it. The grounds before the new front are extremely improved; and the old gardens, with very correct feeling, have been suffered to retain their ancient character. An oak planted by Lord Byron is shewn; and why should he not have a tree as well as Shakspeare, Milton, and Johnson? The initials of himself and his sister upon a tree in the satyr-grove at the end of the garden, are said to have been pointed out by his sister herself, the Honourable Mrs. Leigh, on her visit there some time

ago. The tree has two boles issuing from one root, a very appropriate emblem of their consanguinity.

The scenery around presents many features that recall incidents in his life, or passages in his poems. There are the houses where Fletcher and Rushton lived—the two followers of his, who are addressed in the ballad in the first canto of Childe Harold, beginning at the third stanza—

> Come hither, hither, my little page!

But in the progress of improvement, the mill, where he used to be weighed, is just now destroyed. Down the valley, in front of the Abbey, is a rich prospect over woods, and around are distant slopes scattered with young plantations, that in time will add eminently to the beauty of this secluded spot; and supply the place, in some degree, of those old and magnificent woods in which the Abbey was formerly embosomed.

Here ended our ramble, having gone over ground and through places that the genius of one man in a brief life has sanctified to all times; for like us—

> Hither romantic pilgrims shall betake
> Themselves from distant lands. When we are still
> In centuries of sleep, his fame will wake,
> And his great memory with deep feelings fill
> These scenes that he has trod, and hallow every hill.

Here too we leave the Old Houses of England, in the words of John Evelyn :—" Other there are, sweet and delectable country-seats and villas of the noblesse, and rich and opulent gentry, built and environed with parks, paddocks, plantations, etc.: adapted to country and rural seats, dispersed through the whole nation, conspicuous, not only for the structure of their houses, built upon the best rules of architecture, but for situation, gardens, canals, walks, avenues, parks, forests, ponds, prospects, and vistas; groves, woods, and large plantations; and other the most charming and delightful recesses, natural and artificial;" but to enumerate and describe what were extraordinary in these and the rest would furnish volumes, for who has not either seen, admired, or heard of—

Audley-End, Althorpe, Auckland, Aqualate-Hall, Alnwick, Allington, Ampthill, Astwell, Aldermaston, Aston, Alveston, Alton-Abbey.

Bolsover, Badminster, Breckley, Burghly-on-the Hill, and the other Burghly, Breton, Buckhurst, Buckland, Belvoir, Blechington, Blenheim, Blythfield, Bestwood, Broomhall, Beaudesert.

Castle-Rising, Castle-Ashby, Castle-Donnington, Castle-Howard, Chatsworth, Chartley, Cornbury, Casiobury, Cobham, Cowdrey, Caversham, Cranbourn-Park, Clumber, Charlton, Copt-Hall, Claverton, famous for Sir William Bassett's vineyard, producing forty hogsheads of wine yearly; nor must I forget that of Deepden, planted by the Honourable Charles Howard, of Norfolk, my worthy neighbour in Surrey.

Drayton, Donnington-Park, Dean.

Eastwell, Euston, Eccleswould, Edscombe, Easton, Epping.

Falston, Flankford, Fonthill, Fountains-Abbey.

Greystock, Goodrick, Grooby, Grafton, Gayhurst, Golden-Grove.

Hardwick, Hadden, Hornby, Hatfield, Haland, Heathfield, Hinton, Holme-Pierrepont, Horstmounceaux, Houghton.

Ichinfield, Ilam, Ingestre.

Kirby, Knowsley, Keddleston.

Longleat, Latham, Lensal, Latimer, Lyne-Hall, Lawnsborough.

Morepark, Mulgrave, Marlborough, Margum, Mount Edgcombe.

Normanby, North-Hall, Norborough, Newnham, Newstead.

St. Ostlo, Oxnead.

Petworth, Penshurst, Paston-Hall.

Quorndon, Quickswood.

Ragland, Retford, Ragley, Ricot, Rockingham, Raby.

Sherbourn, Sherley, Swallowfield, Stanton-Harold, Shasford, Shaftbury, Shugborough, Sandon, Stowe, Stansted, Scots-Hall, Sands of the Vine.

Theobalds, Thornkill, Thornhill, Trentham.

Up-Park.

Wilton, Wrest, Woburn, Wollaton, Worksop-Manor, Woodstock, which, as Camden tells us, was the first park in England, Wimburn, Writtle-Park, Warwick-Castle, Wentworth.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARK SCENERY.

How delicious is our old park scenery. How wise that such places as Richmond, Greenwich, and such old parks in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, are kept up and kept open, that our citizens may occasionally get out of the smoke and noise of the great Babel, and breathe all their freshness, and feel all their influence! Who does not often, in the midst of brick-and-mortar regions, summon up before his imagination this old park or forest scenery? The ferny or heathy slopes, under old, stately, gnarled oaks, or thorns as old, with ivy having stems nearly as thick as their own, climbing up them, and clinging to them, and sometimes incorporating itself so completely with their heads, as to make them look entirely ivy-trees. The foot-paths, with turf short and soft as velvet, running through the bracken. The sunny silence that lies on the open glades and brown uplands; the cool breezy feeling under the shade; the grashopper *chithering* amongst the bents; the hawk hovering and whimpering over-head; the keeper, lounging along in velveteen jacket, and with his gun,

at a distance, or firing at some destructive bird. The herds of deer, fallow or red, congregated beneath the shadow of the trees, or lying in the sun if not too warm, their quick ears and tails keeping up a perpetual twinkle; the belling of scattered deer, as they go bounding and mincing daintily across the openings, here and there,—the old ones, hoarse and deep, the young shrill and plaintive. Cattle with whisking tails, grazing sedately; the wood-pecker's laughter from afar; the little tree-creeper running up the ancient boles, always beginning at the bottom, and going upwards with a quick, gliding progress—the quaint cries of other birds and wild creatures, the daws and the rooks feeding together, and mingling their different voices of pert and grave accent. The squirrel running with extended tail along the ground, or flourishing it over his head, as he sits on the tree; or fixing himself, when suddenly come upon, in the attitude of an old, brown, decayed branch by the tree side, as motionless as the deadest branch in the forest. The hum of insects all around you, the low still murmur of sunny music,

> Nature's ceaseless hum,
> Voice of the desert, never dumb.

The pheasant's crow; the pheasant with all her brood springing around you, one by one, from the turf where you are standing amid the bracken—here one! there one! close under your feet, with a sudden, startling whirr,—to compare nature with art, country scenes with city ones, like so many squibs and crackers fired off about you in smart succession, where you don't look for them. That most ancient and most original

of all ladders, a bough with some pegs driven through it, reared against a tree for the keeper to reach the nests of hawks or magpies, or to fetch down a brood of young jackdaws for a pie, quite as savoury a dish as one made with young rooks or pigeons; or for him to sit aloft amongst the foliage, and watch for the approach of deer, or fawn when he is commissioned to shoot one. The profound and basking silence all around you, as you sit on some dry ferny mound, and look far and wide through the glimmering heat, or the cool shadow. The far-off sounds—rooks, telling of some old Hall that stands slumberously amid the woods; or dogs, sending from their hidden kennel amongst the trees, their sonorous yelling. Forest smells, that rise up deliciously as you cross dim thickets, or tread the spongy turf all fragrant with thyme, and sprinkled with the light hare-bell. Huge limbs of oak riven off by tempests, or the old oak itself, a vast, knotty, and decayed mass, lying on the ground, and perhaps the woodmen gravely labouring upon it, lopping its boughs, riving its huge, misshapen stem, piling it in stacks of cord-wood, or binding them into billets. The keeper's house near, in its own paled enclosure; and all about, old thorns hung with the dried and haggard remains of wild-cats, pole-cats, weasels, hawks, owls, jays, and other *vermin*, as he deems them; or the same most picturesquely displayed on the sturdy boles of the vast oaks; and lastly, the mere, the lake, in the depth of the woodlands, shrouded in screening masses of flags and reeds, the beautiful flowering-rush, the magnificent great water-dock, with leaves as huge and green as if they grew by some Indian river—the tall club-mace, the thousands of wild-ducks, teals, or

wigeons, that start up at your approach with clattering wings, and cries of quick alarm.

Who that has wandered through our old parks and forests, is not familiar with all these sights and sounds? does not long to witness them again, ever and anon, when he has been "long in city pent," till he is fain to mount his horse and ride off into some such ancient, quiet, and dreamy region, as Crabbe suddenly mounted his, and rode forty miles to see again the sea?

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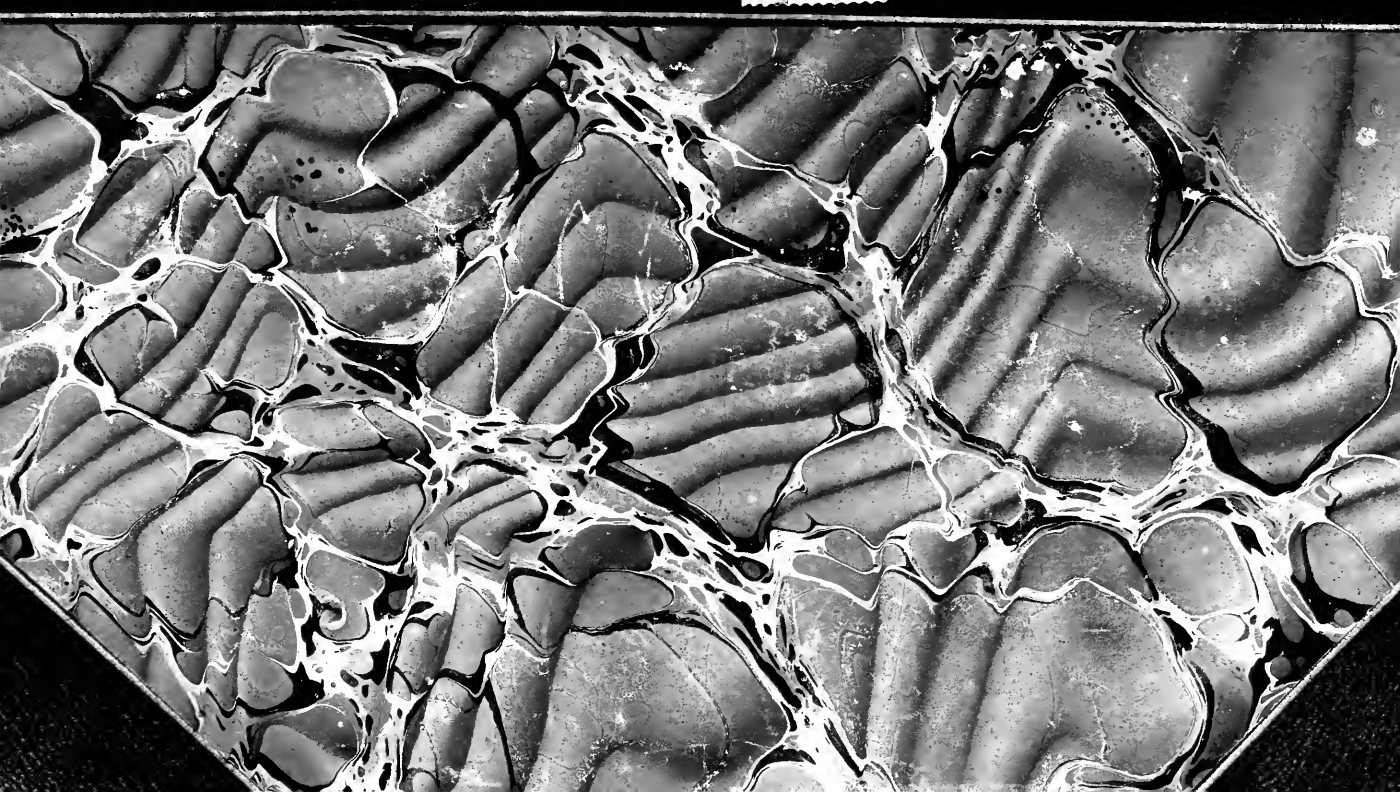
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